



## Militarization and State Terrorism: A Critical Study of Nigerian Military Security Approach

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### **Abstract**

The renaissance of state terrorism ascribing to the advent of Critical Terrorism Studies (CTS) is a cognizable motivation to study the outcome of military security approach of African democratic states. Nigeria, as one of the liberal democratic states in Africa has prioritized military solutions to internal insecurities over other alternative soft approaches attesting to its high level of militarization. The basic tenet of state terrorism connotes the fact that terrorist attacks perpetrated by non-state actors are not in anyways different from that of terrorist killings orchestrated by state security forces, an argument that is abutment to the legality of holding some liberal democratic governments accountable for their terrorist crimes. The sanctity afforded to state as a possible perpetrator of terrorism has allowed many African governments through their militarized security approaches to violate human rights of their citizens under the umbrella of combating terrorists, insurgents and suppressing uprisings in their countries. This research paper methodologically employs relevant secondary sources of data to inculcate various human rights violations and civilian casualties that perpetually accompany the involvement of military or paramilitary forces in internal security of Nigeria as a depiction of state terrorism expounded by CTS. Cases of civilian casualties during military operations to combat terrorism, Niger Delta militants and clampdown of ENDSARS protests are examined to demystify the qualifiedness of the Nigerian state terrorism.

**Keywords:** *State Terrorism; Militarization; Critical Terrorism (CTS); ENDSARS Protest; Military Security; Counterterrorism*

### **Introduction**

There are extant academic publications related with conflicts, peace and security in Africa within the academia whereby protracted conflicts in the continent are mostly linked to counterproductive socio-economic conditions, poor democratic quality, high level of corruption, political instability and poor political leaders (Grasa & Mateos, 2010). The continent is still endowed with the most intractable

conflicts in the world such as the ongoing armed conflicts in Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria, South Sudan, Cameroon, Sudan and Somalia. In addition, countries such as Burkina Faso, Chad, Ethiopia and Mozambique are battling with several attacks by armed groups and communal violence with indiscriminate and targeted attacks on civilians springing up many deaths, injuries, displacements and human rights abuses. Militarization of African security implies the perpetual deployment of state security forces usually military and para-military forces to address these internal conflicts, which has often resulted to severe human rights abuses such as extrajudicial killings, torture and enforced disappearances deteriorating the security condition of many African states. Security forces have been instrumentalized by states to crackdown on peaceful protests, excessive use of force, attack on media, human rights defenders, political opponents, harassments of civilians and arbitrary arrests (Amnesty International, 2019).

Militarization connotes a multi-dimensional process incorporating factors such as the growth of armed forces, rearmament, and an increasing role of the military in domestic conflicts and the inculcation of militaristic values in democratic institutions (Fayemi, 1998). Bonga & Mahuku (2022) analyzed the economic and developmental implications of militarization in Africa with the argument that militarism and militarization macro trends are threatening to the growth and development of African democracy. Felice (1998) argued that militarization confiscated resources from civilian domain and benefits military officials or ex-officials in the government. The study of militarization and its implications on human rights in Africa carried out by the Amnesty International detailed information regarding serious human rights violations committed by the security forces of Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso during military operations between February 2020 and April 2020 to combat armed groups responsible for multiple attacks against security forces, which resulted to at least 57 cases of extrajudicial executions or unlawful killings, and at least 142 cases of enforced disappearances. In addition, 199 incidents of such were also documented in Mali, Burkina Faso (Ouahigouya, Nord region; and Djibo, Sahel region), and Niger (Ayorou department, Tillabery region). Sudanese government forces and allied militias in Darfur are accused of unlawful killings, sexual violence and forced displacements including the destruction of at least 45 villages in Jebel Marra and the displacement of over 10,000 people. Countless of civilian casualties were also documented in sporadic clashes between the government and armed forces in South Sudan whereby humanitarian access was obstructed and many children were recruited as child soldiers coupled with the pervasiveness of conflict related sexual violence. There was indiscriminate use of drones and manned aircraft by the US military Africa Command (US AFRICOM) in Somalia to engage in many attacks that resulted to civilian deaths and casualties (Amnesty International, 2020).

Nigeria, as one of the democratic states in Africa is attributed with high rate of militarized politics, economic and national security framework. The long years of military regimes (approximately twenty eight years) has been described as one of the fundamental reasons behind the Nigerian militarized society (Oluyemi, 2018). Obi (2007) described the militarization of Nigerian democratic practices to have gone beyond the experience of military regime and developed into political legacy attributed with cultural impunity, prioritization of suppression over dialogue and negotiation as well as composition of political offices by high-ranked retired military officers under civil rule. Omilusi (2015) argued that, there is a complete overhaul of politics rooted in military symbols, values, and ethos replicating in the large sections of the present Nigerian civil society. Consequently, since the transition of the country from military regime to civilian administration on 29 of May 1999, there have been innumerable allegations leveled against military armed forces by both local and international media organizations including Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International for committing severe human rights abuses during internal security involvements. These human rights implications of various military involvements in internal security of the country have gained the attention of this research in an attempt to question the existing gap between state terrorism and non-state terrorism. According to Kingsley (2019), the Nigerian security agencies have unleashed brutal revenge attacks on innocent civilians and insurgents whereby unarmed civilians are mainly victims of both insurgency and counterinsurgency military operations.

Nigerian security approach is described to be overly militarized approach to combat terrorism or militant insurgency (Ugwueze & Onuoha, 2020; Oluyemi 2020). This research examines the various civilian casualties (human rights violations) that have accompanied the military involvements in internal security operations of the country with the aim to classify this state perpetrated killings as state terrorism.

The concept of state terrorism has gained renaissance with the advent of critical terrorism studies (CTS), which is an argument that terrorism perpetrated by non-state actors is not different from terrorized killings perpetrated by states (Jackson, 2007; Jarvis, 2016). The attributed features of terrorism involve three elements; firstly, terrorism is a perpetrated violence targeted at some protected civilians; secondly, the perpetrators intend to instill terror or fear in some witnesses who are not direct victims of the violence and thirdly the perpetrators intend or expect the terrorized witnesses to behave in certain ways (Walter, 1969). Based on these features, it is apparent that the only difference between terrorism perpetrated by non-state actors and that of state is the agent behind the act (Jackson, 2007). Terrorism has been conceptualized in way that global war on terror could be considered as a highly effective tool to eliminate designated non-state actors who are evil. This Western-centric picture of terrorism puts western democracy as principal victim of violent foreign non-state actors whereas the most affected societies by terrorist attacks are Africa, Asia and the Middle East. This construction of evil stereotypical picture of terrorism legitimizes all forms of military options as an ideal solution to eradicate the threat at the detriment of civilian collateral damages (Atta, 2022). According to Blakely & Raphael, (2016), the use military, paramilitary forces, private security and state security agencies to combat terrorism and insurgency has equally increased the level of terror experienced by civilian population in many liberal democratic states, which has compelled the population at large to behave in certain ways to ensure the sustainability of failed political system. The sanctity afforded to liberal democratic states in the act of perpetrating terrorism within academic literature and international conventions has allowed many African democratic governments to violate human rights of their citizens through the use of military-oriented security approaches in which Nigeria is not an exemption.

The application of CTS theory to African politics has not gained enough prominence and consequently, the research aims to contribute to this existing gap using Nigeria as a case study. CTS has provided alternative critical framework to the study of terrorism, conceptualizing state terrorism and counterterrorism (Jackson 2008, 2007; Jarvis 2016). While this research has considerably preferred CTS as its theoretical framework, it does not focus basically on terrorism in Nigeria. It aims to critically study the military security approach perpetually employed by the state to address internal instabilities such as combating terrorism (Boko Haram), insurgency (Niger Delta militants), suppressing ENDSARS protest and clampdown of all forms of oppositions and its terrorized effects on the civilian population depicting the concept of state terrorism as expounded by CTS. The sanctity afforded to state in the act of perpetrating terrorism has made human rights violations committed by states security forces seem less significant to that of civilian victims of terrorist or insurgent attacks, killings by state security forces seem more legitimate and reasonable than those committed by non-state actors. As put forward by CTS scholars that state terrorism is the possible outcome of counterterrorism military operations by using the US or Western state-sponsored terrorism employed in fighting war on terrorism (WoT) as a critical case study reinforces the position of this research at unveiling illustrative outcomes of Nigerian militarized security approach and its implications on civilian population.

### ***Theoretical Framework: Critical Terrorism Studies (CTS)***

The interconnectedness between the critical security studies (CSS) and critical terrorism studies (CTS) suitably defines their eligibility as theoretical underpinning to this study. The critique of traditional/military security approach, the widening/broadening debate on security studies and the input of securitization theory grounded in the critical security are equally relevant to this study (Jakniunaite, 2014). Critical terrorism (CTS) has similarly opened up the widening/ broadening debates on terrorism

with arguments providing critical framework to the conceptualization of terrorism alternatively to the traditional orthodox mainstream approach (Jackson 2016, 2008; Blakeley 2007; Jarvis 2009, 2016). Critical terrorism scholars collectively highlight certain challenges of orthodox terrorism research with an attempt to unpack and explore various ways at which terrorism research has traditionally been conducted. The primary proponents of CTS are Richard Jackson, Marie Breen Smyth and Jeroen Gunning who are emphatic on the distinctiveness of CTS in terms of its ontological, epistemological and methodological positions as well as its research ethics, normative commitment in respect to emancipation and reflexivity (Jackson et al. 2009a: 227). Mainstream terrorism is defined as the dominant and widely used knowledge at framing terrorism and implementing military counterterrorism policy, which is prevalent in orthodox terrorism literature, policy, institutional and media reports (Jackson 2008, 2007, & Jarvis 2016).

The critical analysis of CSS to the field of security studies constitutes the foundation of the criticality of CTS to the field of terrorism studies, coupled with the debates of state terrorism and militarized counterterrorism retrospectively appropriate its theoretical suitability to this research. CTS attempts to broadening the conventional knowledge of terrorism beyond a particular form of violence/actors and analyzing terrorism as contingently reproduced or a consequence of certain representation rather than self-evident or objective. Jackson (2007) challenged the mainstream terrorism to have attributed an objective knowledge to the concept of terrorism rather than recognizing this form of political violence as a social construction shaped by dominant social structures together with emphasis on the prioritization of human rather than national security/state as the referent object in fighting terrorism, which is a way of managing human rights violations emanating from both terrorism and counterterrorism. The most agreeable part of CTS for this research is the argument that terrorism is a preserve of non-state actors appropriating the need to include state terrorism into the narrative of terrorism as well as the conception of counterterrorism by Jackson (2005) as a “special political discourse and institutional practices with its own assumptions, rhetorical tropes, narratives, and meanings.”

The fact that civilians have become victims of both terrorism and counterterrorism measures employed by the state is attestable to the principle of state terrorism. There are innumerable records unveiling a significant proportion of state violence orchestrated to force the population to comply with certain political and economic agendas. State perpetrated violence is used to achieve certain political objectives and curtailing political dissents but surprisingly, academic literature on terrorism has paid less attention to terrorist violence committed by states (Blakeley, 2009a). Terrorism has been solely assignable crime to non-state actors regardless of the fact that states perpetrated violence has resulted to more civilian deaths and casualties than that of non-state actors (Rummel, 2011; Sluka, 2000). The few researches on state terrorism tend to focus on totalitarian regimes whereas liberal democratic states in the course of fighting terrorism have been accused to have committed more of human rights violations as recorded during global war on terrorism (Jackson, 2007). According to Blakely & Raphael (2016), state terrorism can be classified into two forms; the first form is termed limited state terrorism that involves small-scale operations directed at specific targets such as; assassination of political figures, opposition parties' leaders with the aim of disassembling or instilling fear into their supporters. The second type is employed with the aim of instilling fear among a large proportion of the population. This involves the use of aerial bombardments, mass detention, interrogation, and torture instrumental at controlling and terrorizing the entire populations. The various military reactions of the Nigerian governments to terrorism (counterterrorism), militant insurgency and uprisings in the society have demonstrated both forms of state terrorism.

### ***Counterterrorism and Human Right Violations in Nigeria***

According to Bakker, (2015) counterterrorism is defined as combination of initiatives employed to combat terrorism, which include; deployment of military armed forces to defeat terrorism and their organizations, different attempts to thwart their sources of funds and sponsorship, deliberate efforts to

reduce enabling environment that breed their activities as well as ensuring the safety and security of citizens at terrorist locations. Counterterrorism also implies the provision of productive economic and political conditions, infrastructural development, poverty alleviation programmes, fighting of corruption and ensuring that majority of citizens have access to minimum basic needs and utilize their prolific capacities for national development (Maiangwa, 2014). It can also be defined as offensive military approaches adopted by state to combat terrorism. It is a combination of laws, tactics, procedures and different measures employed to eradicate terrorism at all levels (Benvenisti, 2008).

The main terrorist organization in Nigeria is popularly known as Boko Haram (BH) meaning “*Western Education is forbidden*,” a local radical Salafist movement that developed to become a Salafist-jihadist terrorist organization after 2009 (Oluyemi, 2021). The group was formed in 2002 by Mohammed Yusuf at the capital city of Bornu state, northeastern of Nigeria aimed to establish sharia government and Islamize the country through violent means. The sect has carried out series of attacks on civilian population and government officials with jihad as its single message, seeking to annihilate Nigerian state along with whatever the group defines to be non-Islamic both Christians and Muslims (Agbibo, 2015). The Nigerian governments responded with the formation of Joint Task Force (JTF) authorized to combat the BH since 2008 resulting to violence and counter-violence with devastating consequences on human rights and national security. The JTF is composed of officers from the Nigerian Army, Nigerian Navy, Nigerian Air force, Nigerian Police and the State Security Service (SSS) with the mission to neutralize BH activities in the region. The proliferation of BH activities in 2011 prompted the reaction of the government to establish a Special Joint Military Task Force, known as Operation Restore Order engaging in extreme violence with the BH. The force was accused of disproportionate use of force and other arbitrary acts leading to civilian casualties, destruction of properties and human suffering (Sampson, 2015). The Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights (OHCHR) detailed several attacks launched by security forces against civilians in Baga, Borno state of Nigeria in April 2013 that resulted to the death of many people and displacement of around 642 people including different cases of extrajudicial and summary executions, torture, arbitrary detention and rape committed by state security forces under the umbrella of counterterrorism (Kingsley, 2019).

According to Theophilus (2012), the white paper on the report of the Presidential Committee on the Security Challenges in the North-East Zone of Nigeria detailed allegations of high-handedness against the JTF, cases of rape, destruction of property, extra-judicial killings, intimidation and harassment of civilian population during counter-terrorism operations. Amnesty International (2012) also detailed the consequences of JTF counter-terrorism on civilian population with records showing “*enforced disappearances; forced evictions, house burning, cases of extra-judicial and summary executions, arbitrary and unlawful detention, denied rights under arrest, denied access to lawyers, family members and medical care, lack of investigation into deaths and barriers to complaints.*” On July 9, 2011, around Kaleri area of Maiduguri, Borno State, 18 people were abducted from their homes and shot dead by state security agency; on the 27 of December of the same year, additional 9 people were killed around Kawar Maila area of Maiduguri; on April 25, 2012 around Kawar Maila, four houses were burnt and 1 person killed; on the 1st of May of the same year, several houses were burnt and 2 persons were killed; on the 22nd of May, same year, 13 shops and 5 houses were burnt as retaliation to terrorist attack; on October 8, 2012 at Gwange area of Maiduguri, over 50 houses and 50 vehicles were burnt along with the killing of around 70 people suspected as terrorists; on the 17 October 2012, JTF killed 15 youth during counterterrorism operations (Sampson, 2015: 53-54). These are cases of human rights violations recorded only within 2012 by counterterrorism military operations compare to the countless of killings, destructions and forceful displacement of civilians that are available on record of over 15 years of the JTF military operations.



### ***Counterinsurgency/Militancy and Human Rights Violations***

Niger Delta is situated at the south-south region of Nigeria comprises of nine states: Abia, Bayelsa, Akwa-Ibom, Delta State, Cross River, Edo, Imo, Ondo, and Rivers State (Oluyemi, 2020). Crude oil was discovered in 1956 in the region and consequently became the engine room of Nigerian economy covering approximately 80% of the total government revenue, over 80% of the national wealth, and 95% of foreign exchange (Adebanjoko & Asu, 2013). The region is inherent with environmental degradation and high rate of poverty as a result of various activities of crude oil by multinational oil companies. The inhabitants primarily reacted to the devastating effect of oil exploration and exploitation on their economy and environment with peaceful protests, which was confronted with the deployment of military armed forces by the state (Oluyemi, 2020). Inokoba & Imbua (2008) explained that inhabitants of Niger Delta have been deprived of progress, natural resources, peace and justice that should facilitate good lives for them. Okonta & Oronto (2001) argued that the destruction of farmlands, rivers and fishponds due to environmental challenges emanating from oil activities has aggravated the living conditions of the Niger Delta people. The negligence of the Nigerian government to immediately address these emanating challenges but instead adopted military tactics to violently suppress the peaceful protest of the people led to the violent reaction of the youth that eventually metamorphosed to the rise of insurgency/militancy in the region. Ikelegbe (2005) explained that, the non-chalant attitudes of the government toward decades of oil exploration that resulted to environmental degradation in the Niger Delta left the youth with no alternative option to violence. The U.S. Government Counterinsurgency Guide defined counterinsurgency (COIN) as a collective, comprehensive civilian and military efforts employed to simultaneously defeat and contain insurgency as well as addressing its root causes (Kingsley, 2019). In spite of the common recognition of soft approaches to address insurgency, it has not prevented the predominance of hard approaches in combating insurgency.

The rise of insurgent/militant attacks on oil facilities, oil workers, kidnapping, vandalization of infrastructural facilities and rampant attack against military officers led to the formation and deployment of JTF, the same military approach adopted towards counterterrorism in the northern part of the country. The force was assigned with tasks of arresting militant groups, ensuring enabling environment for oil activities and restoring law and order (Chiluwa, 2011). Oluyemi (2020) provided detailed analysis of military operations in the Niger Delta such as “Operation Salvage” and “Operation Hakuri I, II and III” in Bayelsa and Rivers states accompanied with innumerable human rights violations. Gbaramatu Kingdom is located at Warri south west council of Delta state received one of the most frightful military operations in the region on May 15, 2009. An offensive military operation was launched by the Military Joint Taskforce (JTF) against militants inhabited in this region whereby all forms of conventional warfare tactics were applied by the JTF during the operation, which included land, sea and aerial bombardment (Luqman, 2011). This military operation was orchestrated with the aim to completely flush out all militants in the Niger Delta and it was described as the heaviest government offensive military reactions in the region. The military armory of 3,000 troops, two warships, 14 boats and at least four helicopter gunships were deployed and consequently, human rights group recorded thousands of civilians that died during the operation including the record of Amnesty International showing twenty to thirty thousand civilians caught in the cross fire. The operation was described as a total war declared against the camp of enemy (Dode, 2012: 415-416).

According to Luqman (2011), the outcomes of military invasion of Gbaramatu Kingdom and Odi Massacre are not nothing short of state terrorism. Odi Massacre is described as another deadly military operation in this region in November, 1999, a predominantly Ijaw community in Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government Area of Bayelsa State. This attack occurred as a retaliation to the report of some armed bandits murdering 12 police officers close to Odi community and consequently prompted the deployment of military armed forces to completely wipe out the whole community that resulted to the death of over 2,500 civilians and setting ablaze of many houses (Dode, 2012). Sources have also assigned the rapid

growth of militant groups in this region as a consequence of the heavy militarization approach adopted by the governments that has contributed to deteriorated security conditions of the region. As put forward by Oluyemi (2020), if military solution is an ideal approach to the crisis of Niger Delta, the heavy military operations during Odi massacre and Gbaramatu Kingdom should have ended militant violence in the region but rather exacerbated its security condition and aggravated human rights violations. Luqman (2011: 38) argued that the same act of state terrorism enacted during Odi invasion was re-enacted in the Odioma community of Bayelsa state on 19 February, 2005. The JTF was deployed to this community to arrest militants who allegedly killed 11 people from the Obioku community on 3 February 2005. The operation that was similarly carried out just as Odi massacre led to the burning of around 78 houses together with multifarious civilian casualties. These military operations were executed with reckless disregard for human lives and properties demonstrated the basic tenet of state terrorism.

According to Musa & Heinecken, (2022), several cases of military unprofessional operations that resulted to different human rights violations of the people were detailed. Amnesty International unveiled the killing of residents of three villages (Bukarti, Matiri, and Ngariri in Borno State) have been forcefully evicted by the military before destroying their villages in the course of fighting terrorism in January 2020. In September 2020, Okoma community in Ahoada East, Rivers State has also been invaded by military forces under the guise of rooting out oil thieves whereby several houses were burnt down by soldiers. On 17 February 2020, some unknown people attacked and killed some military personnel in Letugbene, Bayelsa state, which provoked retaliatory attacks of the military armed forces by burning down many houses and killed many civilians in this community. A similar situation happened in Barkin Ladi LGA of Plateau state, which was the day after the incidence of Letugbene where retaliatory attacks of soldiers resulted to the demolition of over one hundred houses in this community. In Kadarko and neighboring Tarok communities in Plateau State, military invasion took place on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of May 2015 resulted to the mass killing of around 50 unarmed civilians. Similarly in December 2015 at the neighboring Zaria town in Kaduna State, military armed forces attacked over 350 Shi'ites Islamic group members during their customary procession whereby Amnesty International accused the military to have done everything possible to cover this massacre by burying corpses at unknown location and tampered with existing evidence (Musa & Heinecken, 2022:159).

### ***Militarization of ENDSARS Protests***

The Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) was set up in 1992 as a specialized unit of the Nigerian Police Force (NPF) assigned with primary tasks of fighting all forms of violent crimes such as kidnapping, armed robbery, banditry etc. (Iwuoha & Aniche, 2021). In the line of performing their assigned duties, SARS deviated from their primary tasks and started arresting people who are alleged of non-violent crimes such as financial and economic fraud that should be within the regulation of another security unit known as the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC). SARS officers were accused of committing different crimes such as arresting and detaining people without warrant or trial, conduct of unauthorized checks and searches, rape women, illegal roadblocks and financial extortion of young Nigerians driving exotic vehicles (Kazeem, 2020). Amnesty International (2020) documented different inhumane methods of torture employed by SARS officers such as hanging, mocking execution, near-asphyxiation with plastic bags, burning suspects with cigarettes, beating, punching, kicking and sexual violence. Additionally, Amnesty International (AI) and Human Rights Watch (HRW) have also documented multifarious cases of police brutality in Nigeria such as physical assault and harassment of the people, extrajudicial executions, extortions, excessive use of force, organ harvesting, torture, rape, illegal arrest and detention along with many other human rights violations (Iwuoha & Aniche, 2022).

These accused offenses committed by the Nigerian Police Force and the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) provoked the popular protest of Nigerians demanding for the end of SARS with the hashtag #ENDSARS. The protest started in October 4, 2020 as a result of a trending video of one of the

SARS officers who reportedly shot a young Nigerian in front of the Wetland Hotel in Ughelli, Delta State. Two days after the incident, an upcoming young Nigerian musician, Chibuiké Adams was also shot four times in front of a hotel and his friends were forcefully arrested by SARS officers. On October 8, 2020, the protest gained prominence in the nationwide after several videos and pictures of police brutality, harassment and extrajudicial killing of civilian population started to surface and trended online. Many celebrities and activists in the country started to stage a national protest (Etim et al., 2022). Oluyemi (2022: 251) explained the global support afforded to the protest through the social media posts of many international actors such the United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres, United States Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, former United States Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, U.S. President Joe Biden, boxing heavyweight champion Anthony Joshua, Arsenal footballer Mesut Ozil and popular American rapper Kanye West. The protest was confronted with police disruptions such as launching of tear gas and shooting at protesters that resulted to the death of protesters in different states including a victim by name Jimoh Isiaq in Oyo State. The ENDSARS hashtag generated over 4 million tweets and retweets within two weeks with cash donations of about 80 millions Naira to fund the protest. Protestants demanded five basic points from the government; *"justice for all victims of police brutality, the constitution of an independent body to investigate and prosecute all reports of police misconducts, the training of police tactical unit personnel, adequate remuneration for the Nigerian Police, and compensation for victims of police brutality"* (Etim et al., 2022, p.227).

The Nigerian government deployed armed forces on the 20th of October 2020, to open gun-fire at peaceful protesters in Lekki Toll Gate, Lagos, the symbolic center of the protest leading to the death of approximately forty-nine (49) civilians together with many civilian casualties (Oluyemi, 2022). According to Iwuoha & Aniche (2021), the government employed different repressive measures through security agencies to confront ENDSARS protests such as the use of tear gas, water cannons, live bullets and other forms of brutal force such as; the sponsorship and recruitment of political thugs and hoodlums to disrupt the protest, the declaration of 24 hours curfews by many state governments as well as the deployment of Nigerian Army to directly shoot at unarmed civilians at Lekki popularly known as #LekkiMassacre. Furthermore, CCTV and streetlights were disconnected before the shooting started, an indication it was a premeditated attack. This attack generated a national sympathy whereby many Nigerians replaced their social media status and profile pictures with the slogan of 'Black Tuesday, we will never forget 20.10.20, images of blood-stained national flags.' This horrific killing of unarmed civilians holding national flags soaked with their blood is the motivation behind the writing of this research paper to question the difference between terrorist killings perpetrated by Boko Haram terrorist group and terrorist killings carried out by the state armed forces.

### ***Discussion and Conclusion***

There is no ideal government that would allow the rampant of criminal actions, indiscriminate use of force and human rights violations by any organization or individual in the society, which are within the agenda of state national security. It is however, contemptible when state security forces who are expected to ensure the safety and security of citizens are found active in disregarding the basic fundamental human rights of the people when carrying out their assigned duties. The Nigerian militarized security approach has not only failed to facilitate a minimum level of security in the country but also deteriorated the internal security of the country whereby various military involvements in internal conflicts have aggravated the condition of peace and instability in the society. As put forward by Odomovo (2014), the counter-insurgency operations of the military-dominated JTFs have triggered retaliatory violence from insurgents, the more violent forces employed by soldiers, the severe militants have become in their retaliatory attacks. Aghedo & Osumah (2014) argue that the repressive military response adopted by Nigerian state to confront the ongoing Boko Haram conflict has resulted to extra-judicial killing of their members as well as fueled the radicalization of the conflict. A simple Google search on 'Nigerian military



abuses' between 19th February 2020 and 10th September 2020 produced approximately 24,600,000 and 25,200,000 results, exemplifying the extent of the abuse of power by the military in the country (Musa, & Heinecken, 2022). According to Dode (2012), if military option is the solution to Niger Delta militant crisis, the level of military forces, ammunitions and coordination administered during Gbaramatu military operations are sufficient to permanently put an end to the crisis but regrettably, militants resurfaced weeks after the military operations with more violent attacks, vandalized oil facilities. The incessant deployment of military or paramilitary forces with the use of maximum force to quell civilian uprisings; as counterterrorism and counterinsurgent measures; to suppress all forms of oppositions and compel citizens to endure various consequences of political maladministration in the country has not only denigrated the level of insecurities but also a depiction of state terrorism as annotated by CTS.

The rejuvenation of state terrorism by CTS has created an alertness to hold states accountable for human rights violations committed by their security agencies. There is a certain reaction and urgency from the state whenever there are terrorist attacks by non-state actors, which are considered threatening to the national security of state and CTS has argued to have the same reactions whenever state security forces are perpetrators of terrorist killing of civilians in order to ensure that the priority given to the security of state is also given to that of individuals. The centralization of state as both securitizing actor and referent object of security depicts the realist/military security approach of Nigeria, which has historically made it impossible to hold the government accountable for their various human rights violations. The pressing need to start holding states as terrorist organization whenever state armed forces commit terrorist attacks against civilians would facilitate an enabling environment for (a) state armed forces will be regulated and measured during their internal security involvements (b) state would consider more peaceful alternative approaches to address internal conflicts or uprisings (c) both states and international organizations would regulate their military counterterrorism operations in a way to adequately respect human rights and controllably manage civilian casualties (Atta, 2022:16). This research finds out that the counterproductive outcomes of the Nigerian militarized security approach are more threatening and detrimental to the population than Boko-Haram terrorist attacks based on innumerable cases of human rights violations committed by state security forces thereby classifying the government as a terrorist organization could generate the needed international assistance and also regulate the excessiveness of state perpetrated violence.

This research recognizes the significance of many academic publications within the areas such as Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria, Niger Delta insurgency, counterterrorism and counterinsurgency military operations in Nigeria, police brutality and human rights violations in Nigeria but aims to differently divulge the outcomes of incessant deployment of military armed forces to address various internal insecurities attesting to the militarized security approach of the country and its implication on the civilian population using the CTS conceptualization of state terrorism as structural framework. Additionally, there are other researches suggesting soft approaches rather than stick/hard approaches of the government as an ideal solution to challenges of insecurities in the country but this research argues that the Nigerian state has failed to considerably take into account several alternative options to militarization and until the state is officially criminalized as terrorist organization, which could be a blemish to its international status and accelerate the immediate necessary international interventions, the lingering challenges of insecurities might remain uninterrupted. The pressing need to grant official recognition to state terrorism by international conventions and institutions in order to manage the excessiveness of many African states' governments by holding them accountable to terrorist killings orchestrated by state security forces could be the remaining alternative solution to the lingering security challenges militating against the continental development.

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