

# **Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) in Nigeria - Systemic Failure of Leadership.**

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It is December 2018 and a time of sober reflection. Individually, there is a lot to be thankful for especially if you or your family have not been affected by circumstances directly or indirectly linked to the failure of government and its systems. As a society however, there is a lot to be aggrieved about and little to be thankful for. Perhaps one should be thankful that the country is not in a state of open anarchy and crises. The reality however is that there is covert warfare and imbroglio which the leadership continues to deny and gloss over with statements wall-papering over crevices in its polity. The gradual slide into lawlessness makes this reality less obvious. The saying that a toad in a slowly heated water is oblivious of its danger until it is too late, is quite apt here.

According to the APC-led government they believe they are delivering on their pre-election promises. They site a number of projects as evidence of their successes. The reality is that they have made no impact in the lives of the common man if this is taken as the basic outcome measure of successful leadership. The common man has no access to free healthcare, no access to good public schools, no access to potable water in most rural and urban communities, no access to sustained power supply in most rural as well as urban communities and poor transport infrastructure across the country. The lives of the ordinary Nigerian is endangered by a spate of aggression displayed by both agencies of government as well as terrorists across the length and breadth of the country. So-called "Fulani herdsmen" banditry in addition to "Boko-Haram" terrorists ravage the North through insurgent activities. The south is plagued by criminality ranging from ritualistic killings, kidnappings and armed robbery incidents. The number of deaths from terrorist-related events reported in 2018 alone describes a nation at war with "unknown elements" in its midst.

Yet the President in his 2019 budget speech at the National Assembly; which indeed was a display of foolery by Nigeria's leadership, gave a report essentially applauding himself for a good job. An excellent analysis of this event is as reported by Adeola Fayehun in her December 23 release of ["Keeping it Real"](#) videos.

The National Assembly indeed was turned into a Hall of Shame in so many respects. It is a case of the "Pot calling the Kettle black". Sadly, in the quest to fulfill expectations of leadership, the President in presenting his budget speech made statements which were tantamount to blatant lies about his government's achievements. Little wonder a number of legislators booed him to no end in a show of displeasure over these claims, whilst a few of his supporters applauded.

The lies of the government is seen in so many levels. Their claim to have executed and completed a number of projects, claims to have overcome corruption, claims to have dislodged terrorists from their various enclaves and claims to have reduced inflation and improved the welfare of the average Nigerian. The legislators themselves have not shown themselves worth that name in as much as they have not acted to enact laws for the benefit of the indigent in society. They all pride themselves in self aggrandizement allocating stupendous allowances to themselves far and above reason. They have been sustained by mere platitudes as opposed to substance. Sadly there are many waiting in the wings to take over same positions and propagate similar practices.

The pros of a democratic system of government are the equal opportunities it is meant to offer all citizens who appropriate their rights through the electoral process. Unfortunately the cons are that a number of countries claiming to operate a democratic system of government refuse or dismiss the pre-requisites for a successful democracy such as selfless service, accountability, fairness and equity. These tenets presume a basic need among humanity which informs policies and programmes to meet and improve on these needs. Societies that understand this premise have been successful in their efforts to create virile and productive communities, empowering all capable of achieving their potential. Societies who remain blinded by opportunistic gains from the office of power fail to achieve competence in governance. In their pursuit of self enrichment they are oblivious of the systemic effects of their disruptive behaviours. They in fact do not necessarily care about the greater good. Hence they are not motivated to respect the basic rights of their fellow citizens.

## **IDPs and System failure - Unanswered questions!**

Is the prevalence of [IDPs in Nigeria](#) a precursor to final disintegration of a nation state? Is it fair to surmise that the current ineptitude of leadership predicts a spiral into entropy - a state of utter chaos?

Today there are clusters of internally displaced persons within the borders of Nigeria in a frequency as to warrant review of what this predicts. Whilst the reasons for IDPs sprouting in various locations across Nigeria may vary, a common gender is the economic and sociopolitical upheavals birthing their existence. Students of statistics understand how actuarial sciences informs risk management and planning especially in nation building. Events in Nigeria over the past decades provides a perfect example of how ignorant Nigeria leaders have being in their assessment of the geopolitical terrain and prospects for the nations economic and human development.

Majority of IDPs in Nigeria have been a result of insurgency. However there is now IDPs as a result of natural disasters in addition to refugees from neighbouring Cameroun due to political marginalisation of Nigerians in the southern part of Cameroun including those residing in the Bakassi Peninsula.

Unfortunately the threshold for disorder and chaos in current climate is getting lower due to multiple interacting factors. With increasing economic hardship possibly linked to global climate changes, the desire of communities to preserve, expand or migrate to more fertile farmlands or grazing fields is becoming a necessity. This has inauspiciously bred conflicts between previously friendly neighbours. Much has been said about the Fulani herdsmen intruding on previously peaceful villages in areas broadly cutting across the Benue/Niger Delta River basin and adjoining plains. The so-called herdsmen have now morphed into bandits armed with weaponry that would usually be found within the military. What is the significance of this one may ask?

In the 21st century, it is saddening to find a so-called Islamic sect claiming to be against any form of western education and going by the name "Boko Haram". However the paradox is that they have availed themselves of the products of western education in the form of machine guns and vehicles including tools of modern warfare which itself reveals the fallacy of their claims. There is increasing evidence that their ideology is in fact politically motivated by certain people groups who thrive on the instability this provides. To this effect one wonders why the Nigerian military with all its resources is unable to annihilate this dastardly group. The loss of innocent lives, the abduction and sexual assault on young girls and the destruction of communities and the political unrest this group has generated to say the least is an indictment on the government who have been shown to be impotent in many ways.

### **Equity in Diversity - Squaring the circle**

A country founded upon a false narrative of nationhood based on supremacy of one people group over another as in the current geopolitical structure, is doomed to fail. Statistically, common things will occur commonly and hence human behaviour is nearly always predictable. The recurrent decimal of terrorism clearly typifies this rule. The rationale behind a people group whether based on religion or tribe, fomenting terror on others for reasons best known to them deserves to be addressed.

The machinery of government is unfortunately in the hands of the least qualified, least informed and least prepared for governance. Similarly, the wealth of the nation is unequally distributed by a so-called derivation formula which rewards others with the resources from another. This premise is biased in favour of the unproductive group or regions. It essentially 'robs Peter to pay Paul' in an unequal distribution of wealth. The saying he who pays the piper dictates the tune does not hold true in the current political hegemony of Nigeria.

The excess wealth in the hands of a central government with little to no ownership in terms of relationship with its source, has resulted in a system of irresponsible

appropriation of resources. Unlike the First Republic where each region owned their natural resources and invested accordingly, the current so-called Federal system operates on a rather arbitrary paradigm. The creation of states by fiat or decree was not based on any actuarial indices of economic capacity or sustainability but by sociopolitical motivations that ensured dominance of certain groups over others. This approach has saddled the Federal government with the responsibility of sharing the "national cake" across all states regardless of the primary source which has sadly being from the oil minerals producing communities predominantly. Whilst the Federal government would argue that each oil mineral producing community is compensated through allocations given to a special commission, the reality is that this is still a Federally controlled resource and essentially dis-empowers localities in terms of self determination. Attempts by various affected communities to protest this oppressive and exploitative system was firmly squashed by previous military despots; [Ken Saro-Wiwa](#), poet and activist from the Ogoniland was summarily executed by Abacha, the former Head of State for daring to agitate for the rights of his people.

The folly of the current system is that the Federal government has woefully failed to empower regions across the country to develop their natural and human resource capacities by virtue of dependence on a "Federal allocation". Only few states if at all have internally generated revenues sufficient to sustain themselves as necessary. The levels of education, awareness and industry in these states are miles ahead of the rest of the country which speaks volumes regarding the disservice of leadership as it stands today.

## **Solutions**

Only the brave tread where no man has been. It takes insight and understanding informed by facts from evidence. The evidence is that Nigeria was a promising democracy at birth. The evidence also identifies inherent flaws following attempts to define a nation by people groups rather than basic shared human needs which transcends people groups. The place for economic drivers of change was removed and replaced with political sentiments which innately is changeable - so called "Federal Character" has replaced merit in appointments into positions. The clamour

for independence was an attempt to extricate oneself from the shackles of slavery later replaced by colonial rule. Current Federal system of government is covertly a re-enactment of slavery with a people group imposing themselves on others by use of "Federal might". The rights for self determination and association has been silenced through an unconstitutional imposition by a military dictatorship delivering a so-called democracy after the fact!

Nigeria as it stands is unlikely to survive and resume its place among the committee of nations should the current crop of APC or PDP characters continue in government. These parties are themselves the devils at play - destroying the fabric of the nation. They lack authenticity. They have led without a clear manifesto. They have been involved in embedding and perpetuating corrupt practices over the last few decades. They protect the status quo - comprising all past corrupt leaderships who have enriched themselves in no little way. More troubling is their complicit denial of the poor of fair wages or allowances whilst maintaining ridiculous emoluments in a rapacious assault on their constituents.

A future government led by informed and clear minded visionaries, and based on objective parameters is necessary to stay the adversities imposed by current empty minded miscreants. A wholesome policy aimed at empowering every citizen through education and value-driven human capacity development is urgently needed to re-orientate and re-affirm equity in diversity. A nation where one seeks the best of all; and all for one, is the emphasis as only then can we achieve the emancipation desired where every life is protected, promoted and indeed celebrated. Then and only then can we truly say we are a nation and have achieved nationhood.

I applaud the few young visionaries running for office of president of Nigeria in 2019 elections - [Kingsley Moghalu](#), [Omoyele Sowore](#), [Tope Fasua](#), [Oby Ezekwesili](#) , [Fela Durotoye](#) and others. The reality is that this is an uphill challenge and they individually require immense support to achieve the goal of upsetting the metaphoric apple-cart. A few groups are encouraging projects of collaboration.

Firstbaze supports these young aspirants and would indeed hope they collectively come together to effectively disrupt the extant forces of corruption represented by PDP and APC. It is indeed time to SAY NO TO CORRUPT leadership and 2019 represents the nations gateway for lasting change.

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