

## **SECURITY AND PEACE MECHANISMS FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA: ISLAMIC PARADIGM SHIFTS**

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### **Abstract**

*Security and peace are interwoven and inseparable. One cannot be achieved without the other. Security is a corollary to peace. The factors which bring about peace contribute to the establishment of security in a society. Scholars of diverse disciplines including the International Relations and Security Studies have analysed security and peace from different perspectives. The fact still remains that the world at present is still battling with series of conflicts and insecurity. In Nigeria, governments at all levels have intensified efforts to address issues bordering on insecurity with a view to building security and peace for good governance. It is however, disheartening that despite various security measures put in place to tackle the problem, Nigeria is yet to be free from recurrent cases of armed robbery attacks, kidnappings, bombings, hired assassinations, ethnic and religious clashes, etc. Examining the issue of security and peace from another angle, this paper discussed the Islamic perspective of security and peace. It identified the Islamic mechanisms for achieving peace and security during the golden period of Islam particularly during the lifetimes of Prophet Muhammad and his faithful companions. Bearing in mind Nigeria's multi-religious situation, the paper offered recommendations with a view to utilizing the Islamic security and peace mechanisms for good governance.*

**Keywords:** Peace, Security, Social Justice, Religious Tolerance, Good Governance

### **Introduction**

One may be tempted to agree that issues on peace and security have been over flogged in recent times. The fact still remains that the world is still battling with insecurity, violence and conflicts. Thus, people of diverse educational backgrounds including opinion leaders, scholars of International Relations and Security Studies, journalists and public commentators have been addressing peace and security from different perspectives. In Nigeria, efforts at individual and governmental levels are still being geared towards addressing issues bordering on peace and security of the country. It is, however, disheartening to note that despite various measures to tackle insecurity in Nigeria, the multi-

religious country is yet to be free from daily-reported cases of bomb attacks, armed robberies, ritual killings, hired assassinations, kidnappings, etc. In fact, the *Boko Haram* menace in the Northern region and high profile kidnappings in the Niger Delta parts of the country have been giving the civilian administration led by President Good Luck Jonathan sleepless nights. Unemployment, poverty and bad governance have been identified as the main factors responsible for insecurity, ethnic and religious clashes in Nigeria. The multi-religious status of the country ought to be a blessing rather than a curse. The paper, therefore, analyses the concept of security and peace and highlights the major threats to security and peace in Nigeria. It discusses security and peace from the Islamic perspective. It also examines Islamic security and peace mechanisms with a view to utilizing them to achieve peace and security in Nigeria. In order to sustain the democratic structures of the country for good governance, the paper offers recommendations.

### **Understanding the Concept of Security and Peace**

The Webster's New World Dictionary defines security as the condition or feeling of being safe or sure and freedom from danger, fear, doubt or something that protects against loss. The same dictionary defines peace as a state of being free from war or fighting; an agreement or treaty to end war; law and order. It is a condition of being calm and quiet<sup>1</sup>. While making an inquiry into the nature of peace, Thorstein Veblen, a great thinker on peace who lived in the early twentieth century, posits that peace is a state of affair in which economic development supersedes all indices of social development<sup>2</sup>. However, if Veblen's argument may not be accepted in entirety yet, the impact which security and development could have on any given society cannot be undermined.

While discussing the concept from another angle, Othman explains that Schools of thought on peace and security like Realists have always seen security as only partial and temporary because war is inevitable. Realists, according to Othman, therefore, define peace as the absence of war and security as well as the absence of threats.<sup>3</sup> Othman identifies three kinds of security. These are national, comprehensive and human security. National security is referred to a set of defence mechanisms intended to protect a state or country from attacks and threats which may originate from outside its national boundaries and protection from any actions that may seriously threaten the country's ruling regime from within.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, it is a state when the country uses its military forces, police and other law enforcement agencies to defend its territory from both internal and external aggressions. Comprehensive security goes beyond the traditional threats that come in a military form. It is a security which includes threats that come in form of environmental degradation, drug abuse, drug trafficking, economic crises, illegal immigration, forced migration, etc<sup>5</sup>.

Human security focuses on the importance of protecting the well-being of the human race – not just the security of one’s own people but of the whole human race, irrespective of their ethnicity, class, culture, gender and religion. As contained in the UN’s Human Development Report of 1994, human security includes seven categories of security and well-being. These are food, health, economic, environmental, personal, community and political security<sup>6</sup>. Sato opines that, human security is all about liberating humans from physical and artificial hindrances such as war, poverty or political oppression which infringes on the peoples’ rights and freedom<sup>7</sup>. It should be noted that the latter two types of security are somehow identical. While discussing the concept of security holistically, McNamara writes *inter alia*:

Security means development. Security is not military force though it may involve it; security is not traditional military ability though it may encompass it; security is not military hardware though it may include it. Security is development and without development, there can be no security. Any country that seeks to achieve adequate military security against the background of acute food shortages, population explosion, low level of productivity, fragile infrastructural base for technological development, inadequate and inefficient public utilities and chronic problem of unemployment has false sense of security.<sup>8</sup>

From the analytical view of McNamara on security, one can see that security and peace may not be attainable in a country that is well equipped militarily with arms and ammunitions where human security is neglected. This is the current situation of Nigeria. Despite the fact that in the 2003 approved budget, the Ministry of Defence took a lion share of the budget which was N378.91 billion naira,<sup>9</sup> it is quite unfortunate that with a great number of men and officers of the armed forces such as Army, Navy, Air force, Nigerian Police, Nigerian Civil Defence Corps, Immigration, Customs and other law enforcement agencies in Nigeria, the peace and security situation of the country has not been improved geometrically. This suggests that there are some threats to security and peace in Nigeria. This is the next issue the paper will discuss.

### **Threats to Security and Peace in Nigeria**

The entire globe, North, South, East and West is in conflict or some other forms of insecurity. Nigeria is not an exception. One of the hidden threats to security in Nigeria is the economic exploitation of the transnational corporations (TNCs). Dare noted that the continent of Africa has been bedevilled with leaders who have done little to develop their societies and emancipate their peoples. Coupled with this bad governance is the presence of many transnational corporations (TNCs) which have acted as economic predators in Africa, gobbling

up national resources and distorting national economic policies<sup>10</sup>. TNCs have been accused of supporting repressive African leaders, warlords and guerrilla fighters thus serving as catalysts for lethal conflicts and impeding prospects for development and peace. TNCs are said to have played a major role in Nigerian conflicts especially during the brutal military regimes of General Ibrahim Babangida and Sani Abacha. For instance, under Abacha's regime, Ken Saro Wiwa and eight other activists were hanged for crusading against the government and the oil companies. Officials at Royal Dutch Shell were said to have admitted in a press statement that the company could have stopped the hangings of the activists if it had so desired.<sup>11</sup> Shell executives also confessed publicly to monitoring the Nigerian Police, who attacked community residents and picketers. In 1988, oil giant Chevron used its own helicopter to carry Nigerian soldiers, who stormed Parambe, an oil-yielding community and killed several protesters<sup>12</sup>.

In the Niger Delta region of Nigeria also, a group known as Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) adopted a wide variety of satanic operational methods and criminal activities to sustain its source of financing and this unleashed terror in the region. These illegal methods include kidnapping of expatriates, oil bunkering, smuggling, counterfeiting, drug trafficking and arms sale<sup>13</sup>. The nefarious activities of this group (MEND) and similar ones in the Niger Delta region have been threatening the security and peace of the country. The amnesty granted the Niger Delta militants by the administration of late President Umar Musa Yar'Adua (d.2010) to restore peace in the region has not totally stopped kidnapping and illegal oil bunkering. Resource control (crude oil) has been a major factor responsible for the militancy in the Niger Delta.

In the North Central geo-political zone of the country, another militant group, whose name was given by the Nigerian Press as *Boko Haram* emerged in Borno State and spread its tentacles to Yobe and Bauchi States. The real name of the group is *Jama'atu Ahlus-Sunah Lida'awatiwal-Jihad* meaning the Society that promotes the tradition of Prophet Muhammad through invitation and struggle in the Path of Allah. Others call them *Ahl-as-Sunnah wa al-Jama'a al-Minhaj as-Salaf* (People of the Way of the Prophet Muhammad and the Community (of Muslims), in line with the earliest generations of Muslims)<sup>14</sup>. The objective of the group is, among others, to champion a system of education based purely on the teachings of the Qur'an and *Sunnah* as practised by the earliest generation of Muslims (*Ahlu'ssalaf*) as against western secular education. The group also condemns any aspect of life be it economic, political, legal and social system that is not in consonance with their interpretation of *Shari'ah* (Islamic law)<sup>15</sup>.

However, following the extra-judicial killing of the leader of *Boko Haram*, Mallam Mohammed Yusuf in 2009, the group started engaging in fierce battles with security forces in attempt to avenge the murder of their leader. Between 2010 and 2013, the timeline of *Boko Haram* attacks shows that the group has been linked to several attacks in Maiduguri, Jos, Abuja, Borno, Suleja,

Kaduna, Yobe, Delta and Kano, where many lives and property were lost. The Kano attack, which occurred on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2012, has so far recorded the highest number of casualties in which 160 innocent lives including children and women, Muslims and non-Muslims were lost<sup>16</sup>. The group has been a major threat to the security and peace of Northern Nigeria through its attacks using improvised explosive devices (IEDs), gun shots and suicide bombings. *Boko Haram's* notorious activities cut across religious and educational institutions as well as the press, military formations and financial and economic establishments. The Joint Action Military Force set up by the Federal Government of Nigeria to stop *Boko Haram's* incessant attacks has continued to engage in fierce battles with the insurgent group.

Besides the militancy of the *Boko Haram* and the Movement for the Emancipation for the Niger Delta (MEND), the high sense of injustice or mal-administration of justice resulting from imbalance between the “haves” and “haves not”, coupled with lack of good governance characterized by corruption have been identified as another threat to security and peace in Nigeria<sup>17</sup>. In fact, mal-administration of justice has led to the congestion of Nigerian prisons and police cells beyond their capacities. A statistics shows that as at September 2012, the 235 prisons in Nigeria had a total population of 54, 156 consisting of 38,352 awaiting trial persons, 15,593 convicted males and 211 convicted female<sup>18</sup>. According to Adepegba, Amnesty International's 2008 report condemned the appalling state of Nigeria's prison system and described criminal justice in Nigeria as a “conveyor belt of injustice from beginning to end”. He further notes that due to lack of proper attention of Nigerian Government to inmates of its prisons, which ought to serve as centres of reformation and rehabilitation, whenever the inmates are released, they often become threats to security and peace of the society<sup>19</sup>. The suspension of Justice Charles Archibong of the Federal High Court, Lagos and Justice T.D. Naron of the High Court of Plateau State by the National Judicial Council (NJC), which accused the two justices of miscarriages of justice and incompetence in cases involving the ex-Governor of Osun State, Olagunsoye Oyinlola and ex-director of the defunct Intercontinental Bank, Erastus Akingbola, is a pointer to the fact that justice administration in Nigeria is weak and faulty and it can threaten the peace and security of the country<sup>20</sup>.

Armed robbery including bank robbery has become a recurrent incident in Nigeria. This could be due to the high rate of unemployment and bad governance. In some States of the federation, for instance, commercial banks were shut down to customers for a number of days due to fear of robbery, following text messages received by some bank managers that a gang of robbers planned to invade banks in the towns<sup>21</sup>. Due to the high rate of bombings, kidnappings, ritual killings and armed robbery attacks, it was reported that individual Nigerians, who have the means, often maintain security budgets. Olusola-Obadara observes that most of the affluent among Nigerians often

procure licensed guns, security dogs, high fences, electric fence wires, heavy metal gates, heavy burglar-proof bars, alarms and day and night guards in their respective homes. Besides these security measures, some wealthy Nigerians often request the services of law enforcement personnel like policemen and soldiers to guard them and their companies. In some Communities Development Association (CDAs) in Nigeria, night vigilante groups, licensed security guards and members of Odua Peoples' Congress are often hired as security men to guard and protect their communities from insecurity.<sup>22</sup>

Religious particularity, according to religious scholars, is among the key drivers of insecurity in Nigeria. Simply defined, religious particularity is the claim to divine truth or recognition of one's religion as the most superior or authentic over and above other<sup>23</sup>. It is the non-recognition of other religious scriptures or prophets apart from those which one professes or recognizes. In an extremist's view, religious particularity is condemnation of other religions besides one's religion and regarding other people as "irreligious or non-believers" who have been condemned to hell fire. In the words of Dopamu, "particularity is the absolute claim to truth; it is an exclusive claim to revelation, a weapon of the exclusivists who see their own faith as the only faith, the one and the only way to salvation"<sup>24</sup>. While considering religious particularity as a serious threat to peace in Nigeria, Onaiyekan condemns the syndrome when he writes thus:

In our Country (Nigeria), there are fanatics among both Christians and Muslims who think that there will be no peace in this land until everyone has accepted their own religion. These people pose very serious threat to peace... The religious fanatics who shout war and blood in the name of God are often charlatans misusing the holy name of God. We should therefore be ready to distinguish between essence of our faith and its historical expression. We should recognize the limits of our religions in so far as they are human organizations and allow for the human weaknesses of its adherents.<sup>25</sup>

One may quite agree with Onaiyekan's view because religious particularity does not only exist among adherents of different faiths but they also exist within the people of the same faith. In Christendom, orthodox churches, sometimes, accuse the Pentecostal churches of modernization and irreligiosity while within the fold of Islam, the *ahlu'sSunnah* (the people that uphold the Prophetic legacies) often condemn *ahlu tariqa* (the *Sufi* Brotherhood-the mystics) of practicing *bid'ah* (heretical innovation). The ideological differences of these religious denominations and sects often lead to fracas and violence thereby threatening the security and peace of their communities. Opeloye, while explaining the causes of strained relations between Muslims and Christians in Nigeria, notes that religious

intolerance and particularity were, in the past, exhibited through provocative methods of evangelization and propagation. This provocative method, according to Opeloye, led to the 1987 Kafanchan riots and Ilorin disturbances in 1986 and 1999<sup>26</sup>. Opeloye writes *inter alia*:

It is important to note the role of the proselytizers who being over-conscious of particularity in religion adopt provocative methods of evangelization. Rather than preach the beauty of their religion, they condemn the other faith. Though Muslims are taught to believe that Islam is the only true religion, just as Christians are taught to acknowledge Christianity as the only way to salvation. This does not mean that they have to resort to condemnation of one another realizing the fact that only God knows who the true believer is.<sup>27</sup>

Besides the display of religious particularity, maiming and killing in the name of God, during inter-religious crises, are said to be rampant among the adherents of Traditional Religion, Islam and Christianity in Nigeria. Quadri, in his celebrated inaugural lecture, attributes causes of inter-religious crises to ethnicity, unhealthy competition, rivalry, fear of domination, aggressive approach to evangelism and *Da'wah* (Islamic propagation)<sup>28</sup>. He recalls that inter-religious crises were manifested between Muslims and Traditional Religious practitioners during masquerade festivals in the South west and between Christians and Muslims over the introduction and implementation of *Shari'ah* (Islamic legal system) in Northern Nigeria. These religious crises had led to the wanton destruction of lives and valuable property.<sup>29</sup>

Having examined some of the major threats to security and peace in Nigeria, the paper shall now discuss the issue from the Islamic point of view.

### **Islamic Perspective of Security and Peace**

Etymologically, peace and Islam are derived from the same Arabic verb "*salama*" which literally means to submit, to bow or surrender, peace. Peace and Islam are considered synonymous because the concluding words of the daily ritual prayers of every Muslim are words of peace, thus, *as-Salam alaykum* (i.e. May the Peace be upon you)<sup>30</sup>. The root word of Islam, *silm* also refers to "making peace, being in a mutually peaceful environment, being secure, keeping away from danger, troubles and disasters, submitting to justice and righteousness."<sup>31</sup> Therefore, every Muslim who approaches Allah cannot fail to be at peace with God, with himself and with his fellow men. It is by submitting to God that human beings can achieve true peace.

Islamically, however, what peace or security means does not imply absence of a state of war or conflict. This is due to the fact that people can be free from war, yet, they still suffer from anxiety, despair and lack of peace. Indeed, peace could be internal or external. Internal peace refers to a complete

tranquillity and peace of mind when the Muslim believes and acts in accordance with Allah's guidance. The internal peace can spread to the family, the community, the society and the world at large.<sup>32</sup> Internal peace is a form of tranquillity that can be achieved by the proper belief in Allah. In the Glorious *Qur'an* Allah says:

Indeed, there has come to you from God, a light and a clear Book wherewith God guides all those who seek His Good pleasure to ways of peace, and He brings them out of darkness by His will unto light and guides them to a straight way. (Qur'an 5:15-16)

In another place in the *Qur'an*, Allah promises those who follow the straight path of eternal peace when He says:

God calls to the home of peace (paradise) and guides whom He wills to a straight path (Qur'an 10:25)

For them will be the home of peace (paradise) with their Lord (Qur'an 6:127)

According to Al-Sheba, Islam offers self-security, family security and protection. Self-security enables individuals of a Muslim community to have freedom of mobility and movement to work and earn an honest income. Members of the Muslim Community are not to be frightened or threatened by words, threats or weapons of all types.<sup>33</sup> The Prophet is reported to have said:

Whoever frightens a believer (in this life), it will come incumbent on Almighty Allah to make such a person insecure (and frightened) on the day of Judgement.<sup>34</sup>

Islam, through its scripture, has laid down principles that could engender and promote peace and security in a human's society. One of these principles is fundamental human rights in Islam. The human rights, which are enshrined in the *Qur'an*, guarantee, among others, the right to life for all human beings, irrespective of race, religion and nationalities. Thus, freedom of religion and protection of lives and property of non-Muslims in the Muslim world is guaranteed. Allah says:

Whoever kills a human being (without any reason like manslaughter or corruption on earth), it is as though he had killed all of mankind (Qur'an 5:32)

In another verse, God warns thus:

Do not kill a soul which Allah has made sacred except through the due process of law. (Qur'an 6:151)

The Prophet is also quoted as saying:

The greatest sins are to associate something with God and to kill human beings<sup>35</sup>

According to al-Qaradawi, Muslim jurists agree that the lives, blood, wealth and honour of the non-Muslims living among Muslims are sacred. It is prohibited and unlawful to kill them.<sup>36</sup> Islam condemns any acts that can cause intimidation, terror and horror. According to Prophet Muhammad (SAW), a Muslim must not terrify a fellow Muslim and whoever points an iron rod towards his brother, the angels shall go on cursing him until he stops; even if he (the victim) happens to be his full brother.<sup>37</sup> In order to maintain peace and security in the Muslim society, Islam enacts deterred punishment against terrorism, aggression, corruption and other acts capable of destroying peace in the society. Islam considers such evil acts as waging wars against Allah and His Messenger as contained in the *Qur'an* where Allah stipulates thus:

The punishment of those who wage war against Allah and His Messenger and strive with might and main for mischief through the land is execution, or Crucifixion, or the cutting off of hands and feet from opposite sides or exile from the land. That is their disgrace in this world and a heavy punishment is theirs in the Hereafter. . (Qur'an 5:33)

Islam prohibits a human's injustice to his fellow human being and condemns those who cause harm to people not only in the Muslim world but anywhere in the world (Q2:205-208, Q7:33). Islam warns its adherents to keep away from anything that may cause turmoil among the people because of the evil consequence such turmoil and troubles may cause. The *Qur'an* further warns:

And fear the affliction which affects not in particular (only) those of you who do wrong (but may afflict all the good and the bad people and know that Allah is severe in punishment. (Qur'an 8:25)

The above Quranic injunctions and Prophetic statements, among others, are aimed at creating a society where peace and security will reign supreme. This is due to the fact that where there is no peace; there can be no progress and meaningful development. According to Othman, development in Islam means bringing balance and harmony, justice and peace, beauty and prosperity. She notes that it is the development of the total human being: body, mind and soul and that development in Islam encompasses the spiritual, the moral, the economic, the social education and the cultural<sup>38</sup>. Having discussed the Islamic perspective of security and peace, the paper will now examine the Islamic mechanisms which could be utilized to build security and peace in a Muslim *Ummah* (community).

### **Mechanisms for Security and Peace in Islam**

Islam, a world monotheistic faith, is a complete way of life that guarantees happiness and succour both in this physical world and in the Hereafter. It is a religion institutionalized for the advancement of human beings that submit totally to their Creator, Allah. The mission and life of Prophet Muhammad exemplified how he (the Prophet) and his faithful companions built up security and peace in the Islamic Community. Security is considered a corollary to the issue of peace. Factors that bring about peace contribute to the establishment of security. The dispensation and administration of the divine law of Islam, otherwise known as *Shari'ah*, is important to the Muslim *Ummah* (community) because its adjudication often brings about security and peace to the society. Islamic law regulates the behaviour of Muslims. Abdul-Isma'il argues that implementation of the Islamic legal system (*Shari'ah*) will bring about good governance, transparency and accountability as well as peace, equality, understanding, unity, stability and progress. It will also reduce to a large extent societal ill such as corruption, theft, robbery, fornication and rape.<sup>39</sup>

In Islamic dispensation of justice, there is no immunity clause. The ruler and the ruled, the rich and the poor are equal before the divine law. There were reported incidents during the life times of Prophet Muhammad and his companion, 'Umar bn al-Khattab that attest to the fact that officers of an Islamic state, from senior to most junior were equal in the eyes of the law. Caliph 'Umar bn al-Khattab is reported as saying:

I have myself seen the Prophet, may God's blessing be on him, taking revenge against himself. On the occasion of the battle of Badr, when the Prophet was straightening the rows of the Muslim army, he hit the stomach of a soldier in an attempt to push him back in line. The soldier complained. O Prophet! You have hurt me with your stick. The Prophet immediately bared his stomach and said: "I am very sorry. You can revenge by doing the same to me. The soldier came forward and kissed the abdomen of the Prophet and said that this was all that he wanted<sup>40</sup>

Dispensation of justice without fear or favour was further demonstrated by Prophet Muhammad in a case of a woman of a noble family who was arrested for stealing. The case was brought to Prophet Muhammad after it was recommended that the woman be spared of the punishment. The Prophet was quoted as saying:

The nations that lived before you were destroyed by God because they punished the common men for their offences and let their dignitaries go unpunished for their crimes. I swear by God who holds my life in His hand that even if Fatimah, the daughter of Muhammad had committed this crime, then I would have amputated her hand.<sup>41</sup>

During the caliphate of ‘Umar bn al-Khattab, the second caliph (634-644AD), Mawdudi reported an incident in which Muhammad, son of Amr bn al-As, the Governor of Egypt, whipped an Egyptian who complained to Caliph Umar. The Caliph asked the Egyptian man to retaliate by whipping the son of the Governor. ‘Umar was reported to have said:

Give one stroke of the whip to the Governor as well. His son would certainly not have beaten you were it not for the false rude remark that he had in his father’s high office. The plaintiff (Egyptian man) submitted: The person, who had beaten me, I have already avenged myself on him. ‘Umar said: If you had beaten him (the Governor), I would not have checked you from doing so. You have spared him of your own free will.<sup>42</sup>

What brought security and peace to the Islamic State after the demise of the Prophet was the dispensation of justice without any discrimination between the ruler and the ruled, as exemplified by the successors of the Prophet. For instance, ‘Umar bn al-Khattab was said to have given his son, Abi Shamhah one hundred strokes of cane for committing *zina* (fornication). It was the father, ‘Umar bn al-Khattab that ordered that his son, Abi Shamhah be given the punishment as a result of which the son died<sup>43</sup>.

As the second caliph of Islam, ‘Umar bn al-Khattab ensured that the judiciary was completely independent of the executive. He often appeared before the judge to defend himself in some cases. He was the first Muslim head of state to have fixed salaries for the judges and to make their offices distinct from the executive officers<sup>44</sup>. ‘Umar bn al-Khattab is said to have written to judges saying:

It is essential for a *Qadi* (judge) to be just in his decision and should not give any preference to the persons considered eminent in the society. The complainants should produce proof in support of their case while the defendants are allowed to take a oath (depending upon the nature of the case). When you do not find guidance in the *Qur’an* or in the *Hadith* and search for its solution in the light of past decisions given by the righteous predecessors, then apply your own mind (based on the *Qur’an* and *Sunnah*.)<sup>45</sup>

In order to maintain peace and security in the Muslim Community, Islamic law prescribes punishment for some acts that could disturb peace or cause conflict, violence and insecurity among the people. These acts include *al-Zina* (fornication and adultery), *al-Qatl* (homicide), *al-Qadf* (defamation), *al-Hirabah* (highway robbery), *al-Sariqa* (theft/stealing) and *al-Khamr* (intoxicant)<sup>46</sup>. Dispensation and enforcement of the Islamic law can only be carried out by a legitimate Islamic

government that aims at promoting peace, justice and equity among the Muslims and in their society.

Social security and peace can be guaranteed through the institution of *Zakat* and *Sadaqah*. *Zakat* is an Islamic social security mechanism aimed at alleviating poverty. *Zakat* became an institution as far back as in the 7th century as a compulsory alms giving (tax) to be paid by the wealthy Muslims with a view to bridging the gap between the rich and the poor. According to Doi, *Zakat* is payable by Muslim subjects from their cash property, trade merchandize and herds of cattle. *Zakat* funds and proceeds are to be collected and distributed by Islamic government or Muslim Community.<sup>47</sup> Akanni documented how *Zakat* funds, in the recent past, were judiciously utilized to ameliorate sufferings of the poor and the needy Muslims in Pakistan, Sudan and Egypt. It was revealed that 1.5million Pakistani people received *Zakat* annually while in Sudan, *Zakat* funds provided assistance to 500,000 families and in Egypt, over 12millionn deserving people including the orphans, the disabled and the destitute (unemployed group) received *Zakat* to cater for the educational and medical needs of the Egyptians.<sup>48</sup> In Nigeria, *Zakat* and *Sadaqah* Foundation is a non-Governmental Organization (NGO) that commits herself to improving the welfare of the less privileged Muslims through the distribution of *Zakat* funds.

The Executive Director of *Zakat* and *Sadaqah* Foundation, Imam Abdullah Shuaib states that in 2012, the sum of forty-one million, one hundred and sixty-eight thousand and nine hundred and thirty naira (N41,168,930) was disbursed to *Zakat* beneficiaries. In 2013, over eighty-four million, eighty hundred thousand naira (N84.8m) was disbursed to 1,900 beneficiaries across the South-west, South-east and South –south geo-political zones in Nigeria<sup>49</sup>. The Organization has distributed its *Zakat* funds to states including Ebonyi, Anambra, Ogun, Osun and Lagos. In Lagos State alone, sixty-three million, sixty thousand, three hundred and fifty five naira (N63,060,355) was distributed to four hundred (400) beneficiaries. According to Imam Shuaib, the *Zakat* and *Sadaqah* Foundation gave out charity to the people in the areas of medical treatment, accommodation, community welfare project, educational support, debt relief and *Da'wah* support<sup>50</sup>. Thus, proper utilization of *Zakat* funds by the Islamic government or any Muslim Community could provide job opportunities for the jobless Muslims, decent food and accommodation for the needy. Through *Zakat* funds, Muslims can be empowered economically. Quality education and health facilities can be provided via *Zakat* funds by responsible Muslim societies. Besides the compulsory alms giving (*Zakat*), *Sadaqah* (voluntary donations), *hibah* (gifts), *waqf* (endowment), *mirath* (inheritance and *qardu -hasanal* (benevolent loan) can be given to the less privledged members of the Muslim community. All these mechanisms, identified by Oloyede, are the Islamic practical solutions to poverty, which if well utilized, would bring about security and peace to society<sup>51</sup>

Peaceful dialogue/negotiation is another mechanism for achieving security and peace in Islamic society. The *Da'wah* activities and strategies of Prophet Muhammad in Madinah provoked the non-Muslims in Makkah and they resolved to serve as stumbling blocks to the propagation zeal of Prophet Muhammad and his companions. In 628C.E. six years after *Hijrah* (migration from Makkah to Madinah), the Prophet and his companions numbering 1,400 proceeded to Makkah with the intention of performing *Umrah* (Lesser Pilgrimage). When the pagans in Makkah learnt of the Prophet's intention, they sent a delegation of Makkan leaders to him and they met at al-Hudaibiyah, nine miles from Makkah. The unbelievers feared that the Muslims might attack the city. The frightened Makkans were unwilling to allow the Prophet and his companions to enter Makkah that year. The argument almost led to conflict and war between the Muslims and non-Muslims. Eventually, the Prophet entered into peaceful negotiation with Makkans and this led to the Treaty of Hudaibiyah in 628C.E.. The treaty, which was jointly signed by the Prophet and Makkan pagans, allowed peace to reign in Arabia and created opportunity for the Prophet to spread the message of Islam beyond Arabia.<sup>52</sup>

The use of force on the erring party if negotiation or dialogue fails is allowed as a mechanism for resolving conflict in Islam. This can only be possible if there is a legitimate Islamic government. This action is known as military *Jihad*, which can only be declared by the *Amir* or *Khalif* of Islamic state. The Islamic constituted authority is empowered to use force on the erring party wishing to disturb the peace of the society. According to Akanni, Islam allows use of force to check the excesses of the erring party<sup>53</sup>. The permission to use force as a mechanism to achieve security and peace in an Islamic society is contained in the *Qur'an* where Allah says:

If two parties among the believers fall into quarrel make ye peace between them, but if one of them transgresses beyond bonds against the other, then fight `ye (all) against the one that transgresses until it complies with the command of God. (Qur'an 49:9)

In another place in the *Qur'an*, checkmating excesses of a group of people intending to cause violence and insecurity is allowed. The *Qur'an* declares thus:

And did God not check one set of people by means of another the earth would indeed be full of mischief but God is full of bounty to all worlds (Qur'an 2:251; Qur'an 22:40)

Military *Jihad* is a duty which the Islamic state or government is expected to embark on when there is insecurity and turmoil in the society. *Jihad* is a religious duty ordained to uphold right, repel injustice and establish the justice, peace, security and clemency with which the Prophet was sent to take mankind out of darkness into light. *Jihad* is ordained to eliminate all forms of terrorism. It is

waged against those who fight Muslims because of their faith or hinder them from peaceful engagement of their religious rights, Islam has laid down golden rules and provisions which forbid the killing of non-combatants, innocent persons, such as the elderly, women and children, pursuit of fleeing persons who have surrendered, injuring prisoners, mutilating the bodies of the dead or destroying structures or buildings that have no connection with the *Jihad*.<sup>54</sup>

Supplication or prayer could be offered by individual Muslims, families and groups and associations on maintaining peace and security at home/family and in the society. In Islam, *du'ā'* (supplication) is regarded as a weapon which a Muslim could use to protect himself and his family from any invasion or any unforeseen evils such as violence, conflict and insecurity which may be caused by human beings and invisible evil spirits known as *Jinn*. Whether Muslims are in distress or not, Allah instructs them to always call on Him as He is very near to them. In the *Qur'an*, Allah enjoins the believers thus:

When My servant ask thee (Muhammad) concerning Me, I am indeed close to them. I respond to the prayer of every supplicant when he calls on Me, let them also, with a will, listen to My call and believe in Me, that they may walk in the right way (Qur'an 2:186)

In another place in the *Qur'an*, Allah says:

And do thou bring your Lord to remembrance in thy very soul with humility and remember without loudness in words, in the mornings and evenings and be not thou of those who are unheedful. (Qur'an 7:205)

The Prophet (SAW) is quoted as saying:

The comparison of the one who remembers his Lord, in comparison to the one who does not remember his Lord, is that of a living creature compared to a dead one<sup>55</sup>.

From the foregoing, it is obvious that prayer or supplication could be offered on regular basis by individual Muslims for the safety of their lives and property. The Prophet (SAW) has recommended different kinds of prayers at different times and occasions for Muslims and their communities with a view to protecting themselves from dangers. Thus, supplications are recommended for individual Muslims to offer during the times of childbirth, going to and rising from bed, leaving the house and returning to it, entering and leaving the toilet, riding or driving, starting a journey or entering a city etc.<sup>56</sup>. The Prophet (SAW) is said to have recommended recitation of *ayatul kurisiyy* (Q2:255) as well as recitation of the last three chapters of the *Qur'an* (i.e. *Surahs: Ikhlas, Falaq and Nas*) before sleeping in the night for the protection of Allah over any evil that may occur in the night<sup>57</sup>. For instance, while embarking on a journey either by air, road, rail or

sea, the Prophet asked the Muslims to recite, among others, the following prayer, rendered into English thus:

O Allah! You are the Companion on the journey and the Successor over the family, O Allah! I take refuge with You from the difficulties of travel, from having a change of heart and being in a bad predicament and I take refuge in You from an ill-fated outcome with wealth and family.<sup>58</sup>

Offering supplication or prayer at different times and occasions prescribed by the Prophet can be regarded as a self-security mechanism which an individual Muslim or group could resort to in order to protect himself, family and his immediate environment from any insecurity or violence that may occur. As part of security measure, the Prophet used to vary his routes when returning from places<sup>59</sup>. How do we apply the Islamic security and peace mechanisms to the Nigerian society for good governance? Answer to this question is the next focus of this paper.

### **Islamic Security and Peace Mechanisms for Good Governance in Nigeria**

The Islamic era of Prophet Muhammad and his companions witnessed the application and enforcement of divine law that brought peace to the Islamic state. Indeed, then immunity clause “an enshrined in the Nigerian constitution has no basis in the *Shari’ah* (Islamic law). It was the era when Islamic law was dispensed with without fear or favour. The ruler and the ruled were equal before the law. If the Prophet would have wished to amputate his daughter’s hand if she had committed the offence of theft and if ‘Umar bn al-Khattab, the Islamic Head of State (634-644C.E.) could punish his own son for committing adultery, then it beholds the Nigerian leaders and other government functionaries to respect and obey the law of the country. A situation whereby leaders do not obey the court’s order or there is ‘immunity clause’ in the law that allows them to escape the wrath of law, will not bring justice to the country and where there is no justice there may be no peace. Enacting laws that would bring peace and development to Nigeria is necessary. If the benefits derived from intoxicating drinks are less than its demerits and evils, it would be proper if the Nigerian Government could take a bold step in prohibiting such drinks which are outlawed and punishable by Islam(Q5:90). Alcoholism is one of the weapons being used to destabilize the peace of a society. The perpetrators of evils in the society often carry out their nefarious activities under the influence of alcohol. Therefore, prohibiting alcoholism, as stipulated by Islamic law, could promote peace and security in Nigeria.

The utilization of *Zakat* funds and other charitable deeds for the empowerment of Muslims as ordained by Islam reduced to the barest minimum the gap between the rich and the poor as noticed during the caliphate of ‘Umar bn al-Khattab. The institution of *Zakat* in Islam is aimed at alleviating poverty – a

threat to human security. If Nigerian governments could utilize taxes, duties, fines and other national incomes in providing social amenities for citizenry, it would go a long way in developing the country. Thus, through taxes and other levies, road construction and rehabilitation, affordable drinkable water, functional electricity supply, employment generation etc. would be made possible thereby creating a conducive environment for development.

Application of dialogue and peaceful negotiation in maintaining peace among the warring or quarrelling groups as exemplified by Prophet Muhammad during the Treaty of *Hudaibiyyah* in 628C.E. is good for a society wishing to promote peace and tranquillity. It is on record that through peaceful mediation and intervention, Prophet Muhammad (SAW) settled amicably the age-long feud between the tribes of 'Aws and *Khazraj* in Madina<sup>60</sup>. The Federal Government of Nigeria could employ the same mechanism, that is, peaceful negotiation in addressing the grievances of groups in the country. Thus, the Nigerian Government could initiate peaceful dialogue with the so-called militants groups like Movement for Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND), Movement of Actualization of Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), *Boko Haram*, *al-Ansar* and others with a view to restoring peace and security to the troubled regions where the militant groups operate. However, if dialogue will be impossible and under an unfavourable atmosphere, applying military force could be a last resort in maintaining peace and security in the volatile Northern and Niger Delta regions. Meanwhile, application of force by the Federal Government should be reasonable and justifiable. The wrong use of military force is condemned in Islam; as it may likely worsen or escalate further insecurity and conflicts in such areas. Therefore, the Joint Task Force (JTF) set up by the Federal Government to maintain peace and order in the troubled regions of the country is not only a welcome idea, the principles governing warfare should be ultimately respected by not killing, maiming and harassing innocent citizens and non-combatants including women and children.

Supplication or prayer is a weapon of a believer. It is a means of communication with God on all issues affecting human beings. The Prophet has taught and recommended for Muslims different *du'a*' (supplications) on different occasions and times, either during the day or in the night, during war or peace, sadness or happiness, fear or tranquillity, etc. As a self-security measure, individual Nigerians, groups or societies could offer prayers or supplications regularly for security and peace at home, in the community and the country at large. A believer in God does not undermine the efficacy and potency of prayers as experience has shown that many people have escaped dangers via prayers offered to their Creator when they found themselves in dangerous situations. Utilizing these and other Islamic security and peace mechanisms by the Nigerian Government and individuals would go a long way in sustaining the democratic structures of the country, where peace and tranquillity would reign supreme.

### **Conclusion**

The issues bordering on security and peace have remained the focus of every nation in recent times. Human beings cannot attain peace without the divine intervention of the Architect of the universe (Allah). Therefore, religion (Islam) plays a vital role in building security and peace in the society. The noble life and mission of Prophet Muhammad and his companions attest to this fact. The Islamic security and peace mechanisms identified and illustrated in this paper could go a long way in maintaining enduring security and peace in a responsible Islamic society that applies them. The utilization of these mechanisms by the Nigerian Government, will no doubt, bring about good governance and sustain the much cherished democratic structures in the country. Therefore, it is by recognizing the religious role in the nation's polity and de-emphasizing secularism that application of religious teachings and tenets would have a far-reaching effect for a multi-religious society like Nigeria.

### **Recommendations**

Development can only occur in a society devoid of insecurity, conflicts and violence. Therefore, for Nigeria to be a peaceful or violence free society, the following recommendations may be considered by the Nigerian Government and the good people of Nigeria for implementation:

- (i) Since poverty is one of the key indices of insecurity in the country, government at all levels should genuinely address poverty problems holistically by establishing various schemes that could alleviate or reduce poverty in Nigeria.
- (ii) It is often said that a hungry man is an angry man, who may disturb the peace of his society. Governments at all levels should make genuine investments in the agricultural sector with special emphasis on food production with a view to feeding the teeming population.
- (iii) Federal Government of Nigeria should engage in peaceful dialogue or negotiation with all the militant groups in the country with a view to achieving peace and security in troubled Northern Nigeria and the Niger Delta. Considering the number of lives and property that have been wasted due to activities of the *Boko Haram*, granting amnesty may no longer be considered, rather the Federal Government should use her military might to quench the frequent attacks of all the insurgent groups especially the dreadful *Boko Haram*.
- (iv) Nigeria is a multi-religious country that requires a ministry that will see to the affairs of its religious practitioners. Hence, a Ministry of Religious Affairs should be established with a view to promoting peaceful co-existence among the adherents of different faiths and reducing to the barest minimum, religious particularity, bigotry and fanaticisms as it is done in Lagos State.
- (v) Security votes of each state in the country should be judiciously spent by

state governors in order to provide the security agencies necessary logistic support to ensure peace in each state of the Federation.

- (vi) There should be annual ranking of the 36 states including Abuja in the country on security and peace maintenance by reputable non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The ranking should use indices such as the state government efforts in maintaining peace and security, provision of social amenities, creation of jobs and food production for its citizenry.
- (vii) Judicial arm of government needs to be restructured for speedy dispensation of justice to decongest Nigerian prisons and police cells. Efficient administration of justice with fear of God should be the watch word of the judges and the legal practitioners. Inmates of Nigerian prisons should be given vocational skills and knowledge in order to be useful for their society (after their release).
- (vii) Federal Government, through the legislature, should reconsider the years of service of Nigerian civil servants. A law could be made to reduce the years of service from 35 years to 30 years and retirement age from 60 years to 55 years in order to provide government jobs for teeming population of the unemployed youths in the country. However, this recommendation excludes the Nigerian universities' professors whose wealth of experience and profound knowledge could still be useful for the development of the nation. Thus, the 70 years of retirement agreed by the Federal Government for the professors in the Nigerian ivory towers is acceptable.
- (viii) Federal Government should address the plight of Nigerian civil servants by reviewing the national minimum wage as at when due. Considering the present economic situation, which often pushes some people to engage in corrupt practices and to disturb peace of the society, the present N18, 000 national minimum wages needs to be reviewed upward. Enabling environment should be provided by governments at all levels in order to attract local and foreign investors to establish small and large scale industries with a view to creating jobs for the teeming population of the unemployed Nigerian youths. This step, will no doubt, minimize the number of graduates looking for the very few government jobs. Constant electricity supply, good roads and other infrastructure should be provided by the government so that the industries to be established could thrive.
- (ix) The National assembly should speed up its action on the review and amendment of the 1999 constitution which has been criticized as containing irregularities. Efforts should be made by all stakeholders to produce an ideal constitution for the development of the country.
- (x) The National Conference conveyed by the Federal Government should genuinely address fundamental issues that are threatening the unity of

Nigeria especially those concerned with the peace, security and development of the country. Thus, the National Confab will not be a waste of the nation's resources if its outcomes are implemented for the good governance of Nigeria.

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