

APPLICATION OF STATE-CENTRIC SECURITY APPROACH TO THE SECURITY CHALLENGES IN THE SOUTHEAST

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Abstract

Politically, Nigeria is divided into six geopolitical zones: Southeast, South-South, Southwest, North Central, Northwest and Northeast. Of these six geopolitical zones, the Southeast had been consistently rated the most peaceful part of the country. However, in the recent past, these ratings have changed as the zone has become a theater of different type of security challenges perpetuated by different actors including: unknown gunmen, kidnapers, killers' herdsmen and Nigerian security agents themselves. This sudden turnaround in the security situation of the Southeast has generated a lot of scholarly and institutional debates bothering on establishing the causes and evolving possible solutions to these myriad security challenges in the Zone. So far, none of the proffered solutions have succeeded as the insecurity in the Zone has continued to escalate. This study applies the documentary method of data collection, content analysis for data interpretation and state-centric security theory to investigate the causes and possible solutions to the problem of insecurity in the Southeast. The research discovered that the root of insecurity in the Zone is the feeling of marginalization, especially by the youths of the Zone. Based on this, the study argued that the current approach of using security agents to kill, maim and harass the youth of the Zone will end up alienating the people and worsening the security situation. To avoid this scenario, the study proffered massive infrastructural development, youth empowerments and political inclusiveness as the elixir to current Southeast's security challenges.

Keywords: Southeast, State-centric, Insecurity, Security Agents, Unknown Gunmen, Nigerian Government.

Introduction

The states in Southeast Nigeria both individually and collective, have on several occasions been named the most peaceful part of the country (Anieke, 2021). However, the security and peace once enjoyed by the Zone is gradually fizzling away as the Geopolitical Zone has in recent years become the epicentre of different forms of security challenges such as killings by armed herdsmen, political assassination and kidnapping. Others include killing of security agents and burning down of state institutions by unknown gunmen and retaliatory killings, harassments and arson by security agents.

This state of affair has prompted proposals from sons and daughters of the Zone; heads of security agencies, well-meaning Nigerians and men of goodwill on how the Zone can exit its current security challenges. For example, the Vice-Chancellor of Godfrey Okoye University, Prof. Christian Anieke in an exclusive interview with the *Gong Magazine*

(2021), identifies massive unemployment among the youths of the Zone as one of the causes and suggested youth empowerment as the most viable way of making the Zone once again secure. The current Governor of Ebonyi State, Dave Umahi, (2021) blamed the insecurity on the activities of criminal elements and hoodlums in the Zone who according to him hide under the umbrella of Biafran agitation. He therefore urged the Federal Government to make robust security deployment to tackle the security challenges. Umahi's position was shared by other governors of the Zone who in union with him as their chairman formed the *Ebubeagu* Security Outfit to help other security agencies in the Zone tackle the menace of the escalating insecurity (Summit, 2021).

Overtime, various governments of the Southeast Zone have embarked on different youth empowerment programmes, especially in the area of digital skill acquisitions (Gong, 2021). The *Abubeagu* Security Outfit has been established in the five states of the Zone and there have been massive deployments of security agents, particularly the military to all the states of the Zone. Nevertheless, the security situation in the Zone has continued to worsen. Farming communities are still regularly attacked by killers' herdsmen; incidences of kidnapping are still rampant, Security agents are still attacked and killed by unknown gunmen and state security agents are still killing, harassing, abducting and committing arsons in the Zone. All these, point to one thing, the correct cause of the insecurity in the Southeast has not been identified and the correct solution has not been applied.

This study is an attempt to look at the problem from a new perspective. The study uses the documentary method of data collection, content analysis and state-centric theory of security to investigate the cause and evolve possible solutions to the insecurity in Southeast Geopolitical Zone. The study is structured into the following outlines: Introduction, Conceptual Framework and Theoretical Framework. Others include, Insecurity in the Southeast, Application of state-centric security theory to the insecurity in the Southeast and Evaluation, Conclusion and Recommendations.

Conceptual Framework

The following terms will be conceptualized in this section: Southeast Nigeria and Security and Insecurity:

Southeast Nigeria

Until 1967, when Gen. Yakubu Gowon was forced by military necessity to reorganize Nigeria into 12 states, the country operated four regional governments: The Northern, Western, Eastern and Midwestern Regions. The Southeast was carved out of the Eastern Region. It comprises the states of Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo. Apart from few non-Igbo tribes on the fringes of the Zone, the aborigines of the Southeast are the Igbo. This is why the Zone is called the home of Igbo people (Slattery, 2016). However, Igbo land is not limited to the Southeast. According to Slattery, besides the five Southeast states, Igbo land also includes northern Delta and Rivers States and small parts of Akwa Ibom State. **Udenta, et al (2015, p. 2) also states that: “... there are Igbos in the South-South region as well as in parts of the Middle Belt.”** While the dichotomy between the Southeast and Igbo land is obvious, in literature the two terms are often used

interchangeably. This practice is not adopted here because the scope of the study is limited to the Southeast not Igbo land.

Culturally, the Southeast is considered the most industrious Zone in Africa (**Udenta, et al 2015, p. 4**). Because of this, it is often characterized by the great personalities that have decked the history of the Zone. Udenta et al (2015, p. 4), describes the Southeast as the land of the great Zik of Africa - Nigeria's first indigenous Governor General, first President and first President of Senate. The land of the great Chinua Achebe, the land of *Ogbunigwe*, the land of Dr. Michael Iheonukara Okpara, Mbadiwe, Odumegwu Chukwuemeka Ojukwu, Dr. OkechukwuIkejiani, Dr. Akanu Ibiam, Christopher Okigbo, the Aba Women of the 1929 Riot and many more.

Educationally, the Zone is the most advantaged in Nigeria. It is among the zones with the highest number of professionals in almost every field of human endeavours. It produced the first indigenous Vice Chancellors of the University of Ibadan, University of Nigeria and University of Lagos. The situation was the same with the Armed Forces and the Federal Public Service, where her sons and daughters held sway before the Civil War. In view of the Civil War (1967-1970) and the aftermath, the people are marginalized in the scheme of things, and many see the marginalization as one of the reasons for the current insecurity in the Zone (Udenta et al. 2015, p. 4),

In terms of population, density, Nwajiuba (2005), observes, that four states in the Southeast (Anambra, Imo, Abia and Enugu) are among the seven most densely populated states of Nigeria, implying that the Southeast is the most populated area in country. It has in fact been stated that apart from the Island of Mauritius, The Southeast is the most densely populated part of sub-Saharan Africa (Government Printer, Abuja, 1998). As a result of this increased human pressure on finite resources, there is intense competition for the available natural resources in the Zone leading many Southerners to view emigration as an alternative option of securing a livelihood. In addition, when the population pressure is combined with the marginalization the people of the Zone are suffering in the hand of the government at the centre, the result is disaffection and agitations to pull out of Nigeria by the youth. This principally is at the root of the insecurity in the Zone.

Likewise, as already observed above, the Zone has on several occasions been identified as the most, peaceful and secure place in the West Africa sub-region. As a way of explaining this, it is often claimed that commerce requires a secure environment to thrive and since the people of the Zone are mostly business people, they do everything to create secure and peaceful environments to grow their businesses (Anieke, 2021). Thus, the recent spate of insecurity in the Geopolitical Zone has been a source of worry to many and a lot has gone into looking for the causes and the ways to resolve the problem.

Security and Insecurity

The main focus of this study is insecurity but insecurity is derived from the word, security. Therefore, an appreciation of the former requires a little insight into the latter. Nevertheless, defining security is not a straightforward task because there is no universal definition of security. E. Kolodziej (2005, p. 11) has compared it to a Tower of Babel. R. Paris (2004, pp. 370-372) views it as “in the eye of the beholder.” Scholars normally

approach the definition from two ways: contemporary and traditional ways. While contemporary security regards everything as a security matter, the traditional approach focuses on state actors and their military capacities to protect national security. The prevalence of traditional security reached a peak during the Cold War. For almost half a century, major world powers entrusted the security of their nations to a balance of power among states. In this sense international stability relied on the premise that if state security is maintained, then the security of citizens will necessarily follow (Bajpai, 2000, p. 29). Security then meant protection from invasion.

Over the last decades the definition of security has been extended to cope with the 21st century globalized community, its rapid developments and global threats that emerged out of this process. One such comprehensive definition is proposed by F. Al-Rodhan (2007, pp. 67-69). What he calls the “Multi-sum security principle” is based on the assumption that in a globalized world, security can no longer be seen as involving states alone. Global security, instead, has five dimensions: human, environmental, national, *transnational*, and trans-cultural security, and therefore, global security and the security of any state or culture cannot be achieved without “good governance at all levels that guarantees security through justice for all individuals, states, and cultures.” Each of these five dimensions refers to a different set of substrates. We shall concentrate briefly on the first since it also enshrines the other dimensions.

The first dimension is human security. The UN Development Program (UNDP, 1994) originated the concept of human security as an alternative to the traditional concept of national security. It is security as applied to people rather than territories. It includes “...freedom from pervasive threats to people's rights, safety or lives,” involving both “...safety for people from violent threats, such as organized conflict, gross violations of human rights, terrorism and violent crime” and “...safety from non-violent threats, such as environmental degradation, economic crises, illicit drugs, infectious diseases and natural disasters.” According to the UNDP (1994) it includes economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security, and political security. A common feature of these threats to human security is that they cannot be addressed by security forces alone, no matter how powerful an army is. Human security needs justice, cooperative interaction between states and peaceful existence between cultural groups and civilizations. When the recent upsurge in insecurity in the Southeast is examined within the framework of this understanding of security, one sees the reason why the current approach by the Buhari administration has failed so far and the need for an alternative approached that will be proposed in this paper.

Theoretical Framework

As noted above, this study is based on State-centric or realist theory of security. This theory represents the earliest approach to security studies. Its emergence was influenced by both philosophical and historical factors. Philosophically, the theory has its root in the ancient political philosophical postulations as espoused by political theorists like Thomas Hobbes, Nicole Machiavelli among others. According to Ogugua (2021) the central concern of these philosophers was the questions of “What accounted for the prevalence of insecurity in the ancient society and what should be done to ensure or guarantee security

in human society”. They believe that man was selfish and that insecurity is caused by this selfish inclination that pushes man to pursuing his selfish interests. Hobbes (1946, p. 112) believed that man's life was short, nasty, brutish and poor. This shows how insecure the society was.

The idea of social contract as they propounded, was to the effect that security in human society can be better guaranteed if the citizens or individuals traded off some of their natural rights in return for safety or protection on the part of the state. Impliedly, the State was conceived as the custodian of human rights and by extension human security. They were concerned with that regulatory mechanism which will ensure greater protection for every citizen. In this regard, the state was identified as that entity and to enable the state to discharge this function, theorists like Hobbes insist that the state represented by the government must have monopoly of coercive force.

Historically, State-centric theory of security was consolidated in the Treaty of Westphalia. The treaty which ended the thirty years' war in Europe was signed in 1648. After that war, major continental European states – the Holy Roman Empire, Spain, France, Sweden and the Dutch Republic – agreed to respect one another's territorial integrity (Barwick, 2017). The most significant part of this treaty was the emergence of the modern State system. The modern State system created out of this treaty has some necessary attributes. Among these attributes were defined territory, population, government, and most importantly sovereignty which conferred on this entity effective control over its territory and over its people. In other words, such entity was free from external interference in the administration of its territory.

Before Westphalia, intervention was a common policy instrument for the foreign affairs of states. It was used to achieve territorial expansion by the Roman Empire. In the Middle Ages, it was particularly applied to enforce impartial and papal rules (Wakoko, 2018). The Peace of Westphalia therefore, ended attempts to impose supranational authority on European states (Wakoko, 2018). Consequently, Wakoko (2018, p. 12) opines that “Westphalian Sovereignty is violated when external factors influence or determine domestic authority structures.”

As European influence spread across the globe, the Westphalian principles, especially the concepts of sovereign states and non-interference became central to international law and to the prevailing world order. Thus, the outcome of Westphalia has become an international customary law and is incorporated into many international treaties. Hence, the State was conceived as a monolithic entity, that is, an indivisible entity, with the life of its own. As a result, the security of the State becomes equated with the security of the individual citizens and the common nomenclature of national security of a State, as an inviolable security structure. This approach to security is based on a number of assumptions which are itemized below:

- That societal security revolves around the institution of the state. To that extent the State is conceived as an indivisible entity or monolithic entity comprising the security interests of the various individuals and groups within the society.
- That the monolithic state has monopoly over the legitimate use of physical force
- The legitimate control of society's physical force implies the primacy of the military institution in the security architecture of the society. This is basically

because the military trusted with the onerous responsibility of protecting the territorial integrity of the State in any society.

- Under the State-centric perspective, the issue of the territorial integrity and the political independence of a state, become paramount in the security calculation of any state. This is based on the fact that the State-centric perspective assumes that the protection of the territory of a given State from external attacks is the hallmark of the security status of such State. This idea is anchored or dovetails into the doctrine of the Sovereignty of State.
- The State-centric perspective also assumes that the protection of State boundaries ultimately leads to the protection of individuals.
- And finally, on the ground of the last assumption, the individuals develop a sense of protection tied to the security of the State. In other words, these individuals overtime, came up with a feeling that one cannot divorce the security of the individuals from the security of the State based on the monolithic nature of the State as perceived by the traditional perspective to security.

Application of the Theory

The recent upsurge of insecurity in Southeast Nigeria is better appreciated in the light of the theory of realism. This is because the theory unravels why the Nigerian government in spite of its effort to stem the rising tide of insecurity in the Zone has so far failed. This point which would become clearer, cumulatively in subsequent sections is consequent on the fact that the Nigeria state like any other state that operates within the framework of state-centric security architecture prioritizes territorial integrity over, especially normative principles such as justice, human rights, freedom etc.

First, the theory will unearth that Nigerian governments effort to promote security in the Southeast, especially, through the deployment of the military is done in the understanding that such effort would help it to protect its territorial integrity which it believes is threatened by Biafran agitators and other non-state actors in the Zone. Second, the theory will show why this policy has so far not worked. Principally, it will demonstrate that the people of the Southeast, who have been marginalized and excluded from key political positions in Nigeria, felt that the Nigerian government has failed to keep its part of the social contract and thus are not giving the necessary support that is required to solve the security challenges in the Zone.

Insecurity in the Southeast

All societies, even the so called most secured societies in the world have their own fair share of security challenges. In other words, when we say that until recently, the Southeast used to be the most secured part of Nigeria, we do not mean to say that the Zone hadn't its fair share of security challenges. However, what is been emphasized here is that the security challenges in the Southeast have worsened. This worsening security situation is obvious from a number of empirical indicators. The indicators we would use here include: Killers' Herdsmen attacks, Kidnapping, High Profile Assassinations, Attacks by Unknown Gunmen and Reprisal Attacks and Abductions by State Security Operatives.

i. Killer-Herdsmen's Attacks

Skirmishes between herdsman and farming communities in the Southeast were not entirely new but these occurrences were far between, rarely led to casualties and almost always easily resolved. However, these turned into a full-blown massacre beginning from 2016 when men believed to be Fulani fully armed killers' herdsman started to roam the Zone slaughtering people at will. The first large scale killings by these AK47 wielding killers' herdsman occurred in Ukpabi Nimbo and Uzo-Uwani communities in Enugu State, where more than 50 people were believed to be massacred by herdsman who swooped on their communities in the dead of the night (*Vanguard*, 2018, p. 18).

After this first occurrence, killings by Fulani herdsman became very common. Day in, day out, from Anambra to Abia, Enugu to Ebonyi and Imo states, there were reports of killings and sacking of communities by killer-herdsman. IDP camps were established in some communities in Anambra and Ebonyi states to accommodate and cater for those driven from their home by these herdsman (Ogugua, 2021).

In addition to being bloody, the conflicts have spawned dangerous political and religious conspiracy theories. One is that the attacks are part of a longer-term Fulani plot to displace indigenous populations and seize their lands (Crisis Group, 2016). In March 2016, the prelate of the Methodist Church of Nigeria, Dr. Samuel Uche (The Authority, 2016, p. 24) said: "We are aware there is a game plan to Islamize Nigeria, and they are using the Fulani herdsman to initiate it." Also, Biafra separatist groups describe the attacks as part of a northern plot to overwhelm the peoples of the south and forcefully convert them to Islam (Crisis Group commentary, 2017, p. 17). Some Southeast leaders accused President Buhari of deliberately failing to stop herders' aggression, pointing to his pastoral Fulani background and his position as life patron of the Miyetti-Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN) to buttress their charges.

Based on what many saw as the lack of political will by politicians, especially President Buhari to tackle the menace of the killer-herdsman, many communities in Southeast have formed self-defense vigilante groups, some of which have threatened organized reprisals. Following the April 2016 attack on Nimbo, in Enugu State, the separatist, Movement for Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) ordered "Fulani herdsman to leave Biafra land or ... face our wrath." MASSOB accused Buhari of protecting the attackers and called on all Igbo youths and pro-Biafra groups to "wake up and let us unite and face our enemies" (*Vanguard*, 2016, p. 14). The attacks by Fulani herdsman was what led Nnamdi Kanu's faction of Biafran agitators to form Eastern Security Network (ESN) who many, including the Nigerian Government and security establishments blame for the worsening security situation in the region.

ii. Kidnapping

Another indicator of the rising insecurity in the Southeast is the level of kidnappings going on in the Zone. In a recent research conducted by Amuche (2021), the numbers of kidnappings occurring in the Zone have tripled from what it used to be. The worst of it according to him is that the incident is no longer restricted to business people as security agents, traditional rulers and even priests are in the recent past also victims.

iii. High Profile Assassinations

Just before the Anambra governorship election last year, Dr. Chike Akunyili, the husband of late Professor Dora Akunyili, the former Director General of NAFDAC and Minister of Information, was gunned down in most the brutal manner in Anambra State. Before this occurrence, an apparent assassination attempt was made on the life of the current Anambra Governor, Prof. Charles Chukwuma Soludo (Vanguard, 2021). In Enugu State, Prof. Sam Ndubisi, the Chairman and Managing Director of Scientific Equipment Development Institute (SEDI) Enugu was assassinated in broad day light in the capital of the state. In Imo State, a chieftain of the APC, Ahmad Gulak was gunned down in Owerri (BBC. News, 2021). In fact, there is no state in the Southeast which did not record at least a high profile assassination in the past one year.

iv. Attacks by Unknown Gunmen

Most of the high profile killings and kidnappings are carried out by men who the news media have popularly come to call unknown gunmen. These daredevil who most times operate in broad daylight have also attacked the security agents and government institutions including police stations, military posts, INEC offices, etc. Security agents have pointed accusing fingers on ESN, the armed wing of Nnamdi Kanu's Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB). However, the group has consistently denied any wrongdoing accusing Igbo politicians as being behind the chaos and killings in the Zone (Ogugua, 2020).

v. Reprisal Attacks and Abductions by State Security Operatives

Most of the attacks on security formation in the Southeast have in turn triggered reprisal attacks by the security agents, especially soldiers. Communities are set ablaze by soldiers each time their colleagues are killed or attacked in such communities, innocent youths are abducted, killed or taken away to unknown destinations on accusation that they are the unknown gunmen or members of ESN. In fact, Intersociety (2022) has accused the Nigerian security agents of killing not less than 1, 400 Igbo youths within 2021 alone.

Causes of Insecurity in the Southeast

Two things can be deduced from the foregoing, firstly, that the causes of the current insecurity in the Southeast are many and secondly, that these causes have their origin in one source, namely, the disaffection of the people of the Zone against the government at the centre for injustice and exclusion meted on the people of the Zone. As could be seen, the security situation is contributed by the activities of herdsmen, kidnappers, assassins, unknown gunmen and security agents themselves. However, at the root of all these, was the inability of the Nigerian Government to secure lives and properties in Zone. It was this situation expressed in the form of herdsmen attacks and the inability or lack of political will to stop it that led to the degeneration of the security situation that has today involved multiple actors.

Application of State-centric Security Theory to the Insecurity in the Southeast

According to the state-centric security approach, there is a contract between the state and the individual. In this contract, the individuals ceded their right to defend themselves by whatever means they can to the state. In return, the state gives the individual the guarantee

of protection and is therefore saddled with that responsibility. What this implies is that the state has monopoly of violence in every part of the state as every individual is banned from defending themselves. The contract also imposes on the state, the responsibility of protecting the territorial integrity of the country both from internal and external aggressors.

However, these rights which the state enjoys over the individual are not without conditions and the condition here is that the state secures the lives and properties of the individual. In a situation where the state fails in this obligation, it loses the right of the contract, including the rights of territorial integrity and monopoly of violence. The individual returns to the state of nature where the onus is on him to defend himself by whatever means necessary. This is the situation playing out in the Southeast. The moment the government at the centre fails to protect the people from killers' herdsmen, it loses the rights of the contract and the people started resorting to self-help to protect themselves. The situation is further complicated by the fact that the people of the Zone are already feeling marginalized and excluded by the Federal Government. This is why in spite of the killings associated with the unknown gunmen, the group are still more popular in the Zone than security agents who many from the Zone see as occupying forces.

Based on the foregoing, to solve the security challenges in the Southeast under the framework of realism, the Nigerian government needs to reestablish its territorial authority in the Zone. This would involve disarming every armed group and dealing with criminal elements in the Zone. However, this cannot be achieved in a hostile environment where individuals feel they have been unjustly treated. The first step to solving the insecurity must consist in dealing with the grievances of the people of the Zone, especially in the area of political inclusiveness and youth empowerments.

Evaluation, Conclusion and Recommendations

Evaluation

A number of scholars believe that realism as a theory of security is outdated and has no place in the current world of complex security challenges. In the place of realism which emphasizes territorial integrity, these scholars place emphasis on protection of human rights and preventing states from abusing the rights of their citizens. For instances, Francis Deng (1996, p. 1) argues that “sovereignty carries with it certain responsibilities for which governments must be held accountable. They are accountable not only to their national constituencies but ultimately to the international community.” The essence of the idea lies in the suggestion that the sovereignty of states should no longer be understood as the unimpeachable or absolute control of a given territory by its government. All states, now have responsibilities to protect the rights of their citizenry and sovereignty is ceded if a state fails to act according to these responsibilities.

This set of responsibilities, which is enforceable by the international community, is “normatively grounded in the fundamental values of human dignity.” Drawing upon the post-WWII successes in the promotion of universal human rights as well as the “evolution of increasing demands for democratic values, institutions, and practices,” Deng (1996, pp. 6-10) argues that increased interference in the affairs of other states in the post-Cold War world reflects “the growing resolve of the international community to

override sovereignty in support of international human rights and humanitarian intervention.”

Such arguments have since remained at the centre of efforts to bring about a normative transformation of state sovereignty to allow greater intervention in the domestic crises of states. The influence gained by Deng's notion of sovereignty as responsibility was further reflected in Kofi Annan's 1999 speech on what he termed “two concepts of sovereignty.” Speaking in the wake of the NATO intervention in Kosovo and the Australian-led intervention in East Timor, Annan pursued the idea of “individual sovereignty” as a foundation for the amelioration of the absolute sovereignty of states, arguing that:

State sovereignty, in its most basic sense, is being redefined—not least by the forces of globalization and international co-operation. States are now widely understood to be instruments at the service of their peoples, and not vice versa. At the same time, individual sovereignty—by which I mean the fundamental freedom of each individual, enshrined in the charter of the UN and subsequent international treaties—has been enhanced by a renewed and spreading consciousness of individual rights (pp. 49-50).

Overall, all the opponents of realism believe that security and peace thrive better in an environment where human right is respected by sovereign states. Realizing this in their opinion requires a redefinition of sovereignty that allows the international community to take action within the territory of a sovereign state with or without the consent of that state to protect human rights and prevent atrocities.

This argument notwithstanding, it is pertinent to underscore that realism still remains the dominant theory of security in international relation and politics. This is because it is not just true that states remain the key actors on the international arena, but also that human rights can hardly be protected outside the nation state. Protection of human rights and protection of territorial integrity are the opposite sides of the same coin. Thus, the protection of human rights and territorial integrity in the Southeast can both be achieved as suggested in this study.

Conclusion

Specifically, this study applied the theory of state-centric security to investigate the causes and explore the solutions to the insecurity in the Southeast. The study discovered that the primary cause of the problem is the inability of the Nigerian Government to fulfill its obligations of protecting lives and properties in the Southeast. The situation was further complicated by the fact that the people of Southeast felt and rightly so that they have been marginalized both politically and economically by the Nigerian Government. To ameliorate the situation, the study will proffer the following recommendations:

Recommendations

1. The Nigerian government should embark on massive economic development of the Southeast to give the people a sense of economic belonging.
2. The present Nigerian government should also ensure that Southeasters are justly

represented in national decision making bodies. Particularly, efforts should be made to see that somebody from the Zone is included in the high echelon of the security architecture of the country. Also, ensuring that a Southeasterner becomes a president of the country will help to heal the wounds of past injustices.

3. And finally, these other recommendations have to be combined with robust law enforcement to ensure that hoodlums don't hide under the genuine grievances of the people to perpetuate criminality.

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