

## **The Humanities, Identity Contestations, (In) Security and Development Challenges in the 21<sup>ST</sup> Century Africa**

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### **Preamble**

**I**t is my pleasure and honour to be here in the hallowed academic precincts of this great university that is steadily and progressively making its mark in the Nigerian, nay African university ecosystem. I want to thank the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Shehu Abdul Rahman, FNAAE, for the immense job he is doing towards repositioning the University for Excellence in the tripartite mandate of teaching, research and community development. I acknowledge his management team, the Deputy Vice-Chancellors, the Registrar, the Bursar and the University Librarian as a tree does not make a forest. I acknowledge the Dean of Arts, Prof. Okpeh O. Okpeh, under whose leadership this maiden conference is holding.

I appreciate the Chairman and Convener of this conference, Prof. Adam A. Sirajudeen, a robust scholar of international repute. He invited me to this conference and having known him for over two decades since the days of *Read*, his Kano and my Katsina, the pragmatics of which is better foregrounded, I had assured myself that the combined forces of Russia and Ukraine/NATO would not stop me from attending it. I commend the initiative of situating the humanities within its contemporary dynamics in the world and I hope others will take a cue from ideas that gave birth to this conference. I also wish to recognise the distinguished members of FULafia University Community, especially those of the Faculty of Arts, including the students who are the future of the system. To every single member of the audience, especially those that I hope to meet in the course of this conference like Dr Blossom Agede, Dr Mustapha Kannike, Dr Joseph Alagbe and other ESAN family members, you are highly appreciated.

### **Introduction**

It is an unfortunate reality that the twenty-first century, like the preceding

one, appears incapable of breaking free from the complex and uncertain dynamics that engendered the tragic confrontations and bloody conflicts that signposted the First and Second World Wars. While it seemed the world had learnt its lessons in the monumental suffering, millions of deaths and displacements that characterised the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, a pattern of what would come emerged towards the end of that century. This significant indicator and momentous event was symbolised by the fall of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989, a development that Friedman (2005 p. 5) identified as the first of “the ten forces that flattened the world”.

After the collapse of communism and the dismantling of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), what would await the world was chillingly foretold and grippingly underscored by the American politicians and intelligentsia. It would be a new world entirely in which unipolarity would dominate the world order under the hegemony of the United States. The United States invaded Iraq in January 1991 and in March, President George H. W. Bush addressed the Congress after the war. In the address, he outlined the “New World Order” that replaced the bipolar politics of the Cold War which would be based on the international community's commitment to halting the aggression of the powerful over the powerless. Part of the objective of the New World Order was the institutionalisation of a system where the rule of law would be respected with the United Nations fulfilling its mandate and visions of her founding fathers though its objective meant something more sinister to others.

As Yilmaz (2010) notes, George Bush was more interested in harnessing power through a hegemonic structure presented through his fight against terrorism. The catch phrase would soon assume different interpretations suggesting the predominance of Western hegemony, post-cold war balance of power, economic interdependence, advancement of technology and the rise of nationalism (Kessler, 1997).

Meanwhile, in his well acclaimed *The End of History and the Last Man* published in 1992, Francis Fukuyama theorised that there would be a single system of government in the world dominated by the Western

political philosophy as he considered the time as “the end-point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalisation of Western democracy as the final form of human government.” With this proclamation, the world had become effectively unipolar and no system of government would be deemed acceptable except what is acceptable to the 'unchallengeable' West.

The Harvard University professor of political science, Samuel Huntington, would subsequently develop his theory of the inevitability of “The Clash of Civilisation” (Huntington, 1993). Huntington developed his ideas in great detail in his 1996 book, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* noting that “the clash of civilizations will be the battle line of the future”. Beyond the theorising, he also appeared to have nudged the West to wage war against other cultures.

This background provided the basis for identity contestations and the conflicts that would shape the 21<sup>st</sup> century right from its inception. The West, having defeated its arch-rival, USSR, was intentional on forcing its cultural values on the rest of the world with globalisation becoming almost synonymous with Westernisation. The tragedies of the 21<sup>st</sup> century are largely due to the resistance of other civilisations or cultures. The sense of identity that underpins cultures and nations has often made people across international and intranational frontiers to resist impositions by 'others.'

Today, we are a world at war with various violent conflicts ravaging many parts of the globe without an end in sight. According to the Geneva Academy, there are more than 110 armed conflicts going on in the world. The American Council on Foreign Relations' Global Conflict Tracker categorises the scores of conflicts it tracks into three categories: 'worsening', 'unchanging' and 'improving'. None of the conflicts is improving. In Africa alone, there are more than 35 armed conflicts going on and if we are not careful, there will still be more on the continent (Adedimeji, 2023a).

The spectrum of conflict is spreading. The clash of civilisation that was

propounded in 1993 took almost 30 years before manifesting in the war between Russia and Ukraine, which has been likened to the Third World War. It is a civilisational clash between the East on the one hand spearheaded by Russia (with open and tacit support of China, Belarus, North Korea, Iran, Syria, etc.) and the West (with Ukraine being the battlefield in which NATO countries, led by the US, are involved). At a point in the war, the possibility of a nuclear attack was high and up till now, no one can accurately predict what may happen next with Russia periodically flexing her nuclear muscles. It appears the world is sitting precariously on a keg of gun-powder.

Coming to Africa, which has also been a melting pot of violent contestations based on identity factors like ethnicity, religion and politics, after the continent has experienced deadly conflicts in Somalia, Libya, Egypt, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, the conflict in Sudan reached a more tragic dimension in April 2023 with full-blown military confrontations between the military gladiators that hold the country at its jugular. On the one hand is General Abdul Fattah al-Burhan of the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and on the other is General Mohamed Hamdan Dagolo (known as Haemedti) of the Rapid Support Forces (RSF). To complicate the matter, as it happens this era of globalising conflict, each general is backed by foreign powers that would ensure the steady supply of weapons to kill people and destroy infrastructure developed over the years. The end is not in sight (Adedimeji, 2023b).

Against the backdrop of this unfortunate and chaotic reality, what is the role of the humanities in engendering the culture of peace in Africa and restoring security and development to the continent? How can human beings be human and humane by steering themselves away from the materialistic, mechanistic and technocratic approach to life which has gained momentum in the past few years? How can development be truly achieved in the quality of the human soul and not just the quantity of material possessions? The humanities provides the answers to the problems that assail the modern world in which we subordinate the qualitative to the quantitative and assume that only what can be counted counts whereas not all that counts can be counted.

This paper situates the disciplines of humanities at the centre of the human universe as the essence and future of humanity. It accentuates the relevance of humanities to the contemporary world and deconstructs the identity contestations that the continent has been grappling with. It analyses the development and security challenges that confront Africa in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and proffers a multi-level approach to confronting the challenges and restoring peace and development. These are personal, social, communal, national and international levels all aimed at restoring the dignity of humanity, respecting value of life and embracing the values of peace, discipline, decency and restraint enshrine in African cultures through which peace, development and security can be guaranteed (Adedimeji, 2017).

### **Humanities for humanity**

Etymologically, “humanities” derives from the Renaissance Latin expression, “studia humanitatis” or “study of humanitas” through the Latin “humanus”, which means “human; cultured and refined”. Apart from *humanitas* denoting “humanity, culture, refinement and education”, it refers to “an education befitting a cultivated man”, which expands the knowledge of human cultures, values and helps us to understand our commonalities and differences. The humanities constitutes the foundation of all academic disciplines and its scope covers anthropology, law, communication studies, media studies, archeology, linguistics, literature, religious studies, performing arts and philosophy.

Otherwise known as Arts, disciplines in humanities are as old as human history and they are regarded as the requirements for the survival and sustenance of human society. Apart from supporting the discovery of self and the understanding of man's role in the universe, humanities deepen the understanding of human nature, behaviour and social engagement and intellectual development. They teach how to love, learn, live and laugh on the planet earth and provide antidotes to the maladies that afflict man (Adedimeji, 1999).

The humanities are thought of as a loosely defined range of academic courses unified by a commitment to researching aspects of the human

condition. The humanities, unlike other subjects, do not refer to a collection of scientific or technological fields. The disciplines are concerned about the ideas, artistic expressions, and cultures of people across places and time. They encompass the numerous disciplines of research that investigate how human beings imaginatively understand and express the meanings of their lived experiences through creative activity.

For instance, short stories, novels, poetry, play and theatre, among other forms of literature, reflect varied ways of communicating the meanings of people's life experiences to others. Religions and belief systems reveal how humans connect the creed with conduct to reach the divine while the consciousness of the past that history engenders helps to solve present problems and predict or control the future. The humanities include the classics, literature and languages, philosophy, and the visual and performing arts. All of these examine how people create a world of meanings and interpretations around their lives, allowing them to make intellectual and spiritual sense of their surroundings.

The humanities, in general, help people understand human traditions, values, and challenges. History, anthropology, art history, philosophy, language and linguistics, literature and jurisprudence are examples of humanities disciplines that to help us comprehend and identify cultures, as well as human identity and experience. These should appeal to anyone who believes that one of the purposes of education should be to cultivate mind, image, and character through exposure to a civilisation's best ideas and expressions. They assist us in appreciating our literary legacy and how it links to today's norms, ideals, and values.

It is an open sore on the global conscience that the relegation of humanities has led to the tragedy of errors for humanity. Mahtma Ghandi once identified “the seven blunders” of the modern world that he earlier referred to as “seven social sins” in an article he published in his “*Young India*” weekly newspaper on October 22, 1925. These blunders are wealth without work, pleasure without conscience, knowledge without character, commerce without morality, science without humanity, worship without sacrifice and politics without principle. These seven

blunders are still prominent today in our world with science without humanity being prominent. Arun Gandhi, his grandson, added the eighth, which he called “rights without responsibilities”. Using the African context as a reference point, Adedimeji (2013) added two to the list, “democracy without decorum, courts without justice” but there is no doubt that the blunders would be been blotted out if humanities were allowed to percolate humanity.

The negative implication of the contemporary obsession with sciences at the expense of humanity is not to the scientific community itself. Acclaimed as the most notable scientist of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Albert Einstein first drew attention to the danger of the obsession with only science in his “A Message to Intellectuals” on August 29, 1948. According to him, “By painful experience, we have learnt that rational thinking does not suffice to solve the problems of our social life. Penetrating research and keen scientific work have often had tragic implications for mankind...creating the means for his own mass destruction. This, indeed, is a tragedy of overwhelming poignancy.” This tragedy of overwhelming proportions is being witnessed in all gamuts of contemporary life in Africa where traditional values have been misplaced and many people care only about material wealth at the expense of love, compassion, empathy, kindness, truth, honesty, justice and other values that count but cannot be counted.

Besides, a professor of Astrophysics at the University of Rochester, Adam Frank, who describes himself as “evangelist of science” points out that the world is missing a point in relegating the humanities. In his article, “What is the Value of an Education in the Humanities?” (2016), the author regrets the little attention being given to liberal arts, “...used to contrast an education focusing on the arts and humanities (English, history, philosophy, etc.) with one focusing on technical subjects that include engineering.” Arguing that four years spent in the college or university is often “the sole chance we give ourselves to think deeply and broadly about our place in the world”, he laments that turning the university to “nothing more than a job training (emphasising only those jobs that pay well) is another missed opportunity for students and the society that needs them” (Frank, 2016). He submits:

In spite of being a scientist, I strongly believe an education that fails to place a heavy emphasis on the humanities is a missed opportunity. Without a base in humanities, both the students and the democratic society these students must enter as informed citizens – are denied a full view of the heritage and critical habits of mind that make civilization worth the effort (Frank, 2016).

### **Deconstructing Identity Contestations**

That identity contestations would drive conflicts finds theoretical underpinning in Huntington's work earlier referenced. He argues that the world is increasingly divided into cultural and civilisational fault-lines (Huntington, 1996). The primary source of conflict in the world would no longer be ideological but cultural or identity-related. "Identity" has become a popular term more than ever before, especially in the twenty-first century, with its prominence reflecting a growing interest in and worry about the concept (Tarus & Lowrey, 2017). How identity is constructed or defined is critical: is it defined in ways that lead to contestation, division, isolation, radicalism, or violence, or is it defined in ways that embrace others and respect the "outsider"?

According to Tarus and Lowrey (2017), identity refers to a person's or a group's self-understanding, which can include labels applied by others as well as labels chosen by the person/group themselves. Individual and personal characteristics, as well as social qualities obtained through the groups one belongs to, are all part of one's identity. As a result, identity encompasses both resemblance and difference, as well as individual and communal aspects.

Identity is a set of symbols or signals, both material and behavioural that distinguishes an individual or group of individuals from others on various scales and in many ways (Ahimsa, 2013). Identity, according to Sinisa (2008), is a basic factor that no person can negotiate, hence claiming not to have or want an identity can be regarded weird (Sinisa, 2008). It is contended that African identity contestations are frequently centered on the social/communal aspects of identity.

Humans are social beings and to be human is to be with others. As a result, the concept of humans as purely in-community individuals can be found as one of the features of the contemporary society. The term "social identity" is used in sociology to describe the aspect of a person's identity that is moulded by their membership in a group. Membership confers a sense of belonging as well as group standards and values, which the person must share and comply to, at least to some extent, in order to be accepted as a member of the group.

As a result, identity contestation is a constructive force rather than a bad reality. When used as a symbol of exclusion or to incite physical or non-physical violence between ethnic groups, however, it becomes negative. This negative aspect of identity contestation is referred to as "ethnocentrism", "tribalism", or "negative ethnicity" and it is one of Africa's security and development challenges in the twenty-first century (Tarus & Gathogo, 2016). It is the belief that one's ethnic group is superior to others. Tribalism, racism, and xenophobia, according to Nothwehr (2008), are the attitudes and behaviours of having such strong feelings of loyalty or connections to one's tribe/race/group that one excludes or even demonises people who do not belong to that group. While some researchers, particularly those from Africa, prefer the term "negative ethnicity", others prefer the term "tribalism." This is due to the negative connotations attached to the term "tribalism".

Meanwhile, the prevalence of identity contestation is not only an African problem but also a global reality and pandemonium. Identity contestations in Africa have been documented for quite some time but the 21<sup>st</sup> century has exacerbated its manifestations. The pattern changes in reaction to the problems and opportunities that geography and demographics present. In Nigeria, it may be about resource control in the Niger Delta, reawakening ethnic solidarity among the Biafra agitators and terrorists in the South East, religious extremism such as Boko Haram in the North East and land ownership in the Middle Belt. The demographics of various African countries also determines the spectra of contestations based on political, economic, ethnic, religious, ideological, communal and social factors.

Research has established that social divisions reflected through identity contestations heighten differentiations and inequality within African countries, with inequality expanding both between and within groups. These fractures come in a variety of shapes and sizes, and they take many forms, including tribal, ethnic, class, gender, regional and other dimensions. Over the last decade, competition between and within tribal groupings has intensified, with clashes manifesting in violence, land disputes, labour conflicts, social frictions, and loss of economic power.

For context, the world was horrified by the genocide in Rwanda between the Hutus and Tutsis in 1994. The killings and 'revenge killings' (meant for justice) lasted for 100 days during which over a million people perished. But Rwanda, one of the fastest-developing African countries today, was able to overcome the bitter memories of war through the strategy of 'confession' (truth) and 'forgiveness, a point stressed by Annie Kubai in her 2016 paper, "Confession' and 'forgiveness' as a strategy of development in post-genocide Rwanda".

With the reconstruction of identity as demonstrated by Rwanda, there is the possibility of seeing the 'other' in 'self' and 'self' in the 'other'. That is the level to which Africa must move, starting from Nigeria where we cannot even agree on how to swat a fly. This reflected deeply in the politics of identity that characterised the 2023 general elections where ethnic and religious solidarities contributed to the tension generated before, during and after the elections.

Identity reconstruction can be exemplified by the case of Alice Mukarurinda, a Tutsi lady, who ran for dear life after losing 26 family members to an attack by the Hutus during the Rwandan genocide. She later sought refuge in a forested swamp where she hid with her nine-month old daughter and nine-year old niece. They were soon discovered and the two children were gruesomely murdered before her. Her school mate, Emmanuel Ndayisaba, a Hutu, lifted his machete to hack her but she raised her arm for defence, losing her hand in the process. Her face was sliced and her shoulder was speared. She was left for dead by the assailant but she survived. Years after the genocide, Emmanuel, after serving his term in prison, was surprised to see Alice, who he thought he

had killed. He sought forgiveness and she forgave him. That is the spirit to cultivate (Kubai, 2016).

Meanwhile, identity is not always about negativity and the African experience also provides basis for preservation and protection. One interpretation of African identity is founded on the philosophy that so-called Africans should not only celebrate an identity based on racialised blackness but also seek out (and hopefully assist) any black person everywhere in the globe. Essentially, it was the black experience of enslavement, as well as colonialism, that aided in the development of such reinforced identities that made it possible to resist oppression confront injustice.

The fact that the individuals who were written out of history are also the architects of some of the continent's worst excesses, like ethnic conflicts, genocides, and other expressions of black-on-black hatred and violence, is a cruel irony. In this regard, identity contestations are characterised by great diversity of insurgencies, resource and identity conflicts, and post-conflict stabilisation to growing threats from piracy, narcotics trafficking, violent religious extremism, and organised crime taking root in urban slums, among others. This precarious environment jeopardises security at the societal, community and individual levels and Africans must build institutional capacity to address the challenges (Babatunde, Adedimeji, Raji, Maweu& Githigaro, 2022).

### **Security and Development Challenges in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Africa**

Insurgency, terrorism, and intolerance have all played a role in Africa's recent intrastate wars, which have been orchestrated by identity contestations. Conflicts on the continent range from Rwanda to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic to Uganda, Mali to Niger, Somalia to Kenya, Chad to Cameroon, Sudan to South Sudan, Guinea Bissau to Sierra Leone, Nigeria to Benin, and Liberia to the Ivory Coast. Thousands of individuals, men and women, young and old, have been slaughtered as a result of these armed conflicts, resulting in over 10 million refugees and internally displaced persons (Adedimeji, 2015).

Since the end of the last century till today, the continent has been experiencing conflicts in various forms and dimensions; millions of people have died, hundreds of thousands have lost their homes and property, several families have been split up, millions have been internally displaced, and others have become refugees in neighbouring countries. The Rwandan genocide in 1994 claimed about a million lives in just 100 days; the Boko Haram insurgency, banditry, kidnapping, and ritualism in Nigeria have claimed thousands of lives while others have lost their livelihood; thousands have died in the Central African Republic (CAR) while nearly a million people have become internally displaced. The majority of these disputes can be linked back to real or perceived injustice, marginalisation, and inequality that are apologetic to identity issues.

As of 2023, there have been more than 35 major wars in Africa. There have been rare border disputes between adjacent governments, such as Nigeria and Cameroon's dispute over Bakassi and Guinea's seizure of Sierra Leonean land along their shared border (Bamfo, 2013). Armed rebels from Sierra Leone launched repeated attacks on the Guinean villages of Massadou, Pamalap, and Macenta, prompting Guinean forces to occupy Sierra Leonean territory in 2000 to prevent rebel forces from reaching Guinea. Guinea has refused to relinquish control of that land. Chad has also had problems with Libya over a substantial portion of its land, roughly 25,000 square miles, as well as along the Chad-Niger and Niger-Nigeria borders (Cham, 2012).

Internal political conflicts have occasionally spilled over into neighbouring states when governments, whether intentionally or unintentionally, have provided safe havens for rebels. Charles Taylor, Liberia's former president, made several trips inside Sierra Leone to pursue the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) rebels who were battling his army (Bamfo, 2013). The civil conflict in Côte d'Ivoire spilled over into Liberia in 2010, when rebels backing Laurent Gbagbo crossed the border to seek refuge and launch counterattacks against Ouattara's administration. During Eyadema's long reign in Togo, he accused Ghanaian governments of sheltering and supporting renegade organisations plotting the destruction of his regime.

The Senegalese government has initiated raids against Casamance separatists on a regular basis, forcing both insurgents and civilians to flee to Guinea Bissau.

Internal squabbles between ethnic groups or between regions or ethnic groups with the central government over policy matters are another key security issue that continues to affect African countries. A group's dispute with the government frequently stems from a sense of being tricked by the way the government shares budget money, with a resource-rich region suspecting the government of diverting funds to poorer regions. A factor has been a lack of money for governments to distribute to regions, as well as governments' prebendalism, the sense of entitlement that many public officials and private residents thought they had to the public resources. Dissatisfaction with people from neighbouring regions and nomadic traders who relocate into their neighbourhood has also sparked conflict among groups. Local farmers may object to non-native farmers encroaching on their land, therefore itinerant farmers may face opposition from them.

The herders have been migrating south from Niger, Mali, and Chad into Nigeria, Ghana, and Cote d'Ivoire for decades in search of greener pastures for their cattle and markets with higher meat prices. As the number of herders and the frequency of their ventures southward grow, so does the risk of their incursions violating a country's security architecture, as the migrating herdsmen clash with locals. Local farmers whose properties have been pillaged by roving herds have been at the centre of the majority of conflicts. Nigeria, Ghana, and Cote d'Ivoire have been the hardest hit by these herds. The herders have retaliated with violence in response to the difficult living circumstances and hostility they have faced from natives.

Conflicts between herders and indigenous communities have been reported in numerous Nigerian states. As it applies in other West African countries, thousands of death have been recorded through the perennial farmer-herder conflicts with thousands more displaced. Apart from deaths and displacements, Nigeria loses \$13.7 billion annually to the seemingly protracted conflict, according the Nigerian former Head of

State, General Abdulsalami Abubakar (rtd). Today, the farmer-herder conflict contributes to the soaring number of the recorded 1.9 million internally displaced persons in Nigeria (Adedimeji, 2020).

Locals have long been dissatisfied with the religious teaching and norms that immigrants bring to their community, which they find repulsive. Within African societies, followers of the two prominent religions, Christianity and Islam, have frequently fought over theology and lifestyle. Conflicts have erupted in a number of African countries, with few indications of abating. Religious wars have been particularly severe in Cote d'Ivoire and Nigeria. The 2002 civil war in Cote d'Ivoire was initiated by Christian leaders in the south attempting to disqualify a northern candidate from running in the next presidential elections. As a result of the war, the kingdom was divided into two halves: a Muslim north and a Christian south. The same pattern is noticeable in the Nigerian politics where religion is often weaponised for political reasons.

Disgruntled groups mount identity contests against ruling regimes, which have become a major security concern to African countries. According to the ISS/PSC Report (2021), six African conflict hotbeds to monitor in 2022 are Libya, South Sudan, the Central African Republic, Northern Mozambique, Ethiopia, and Cameroon's north-west and south-west areas. After years of turmoil and a severe civil conflict from 2018 to 2019, the situation in Libya has not greatly improved. These conflicts have a variety of causes, ranging from cultural to economic to political, and they wreaked untold havoc on those who were directly or indirectly affected by them.

Another internal challenge to African countries' security and development is the cultural difference between their Francophone and Anglophone citizens. There are misgivings between Francophone and Anglophone Africans due to the policies adopted the colonialists in administering the countries under their influence. During World War I, the French happily absorbed local African soldiers, and most French leaders referred to their West African colonies as "a reservoir of men." The British, on the other hand, pursued a strictly commercial, restrictive,

and conservative strategy. More than the United Kingdom, France maintains a complex series of relationships with its colonies, including social, political, economic, and military ties (Le Vine, 2004).

The twenty-first century is still young but most African countries are mired in poverty, with the Sahelian region, which includes Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso, experiencing a serious level of economic collapse due to drought. There have been violent conflicts in Mali between the Tuaregs, who have a history of revolting, and the government in Bamako. The declaration of independence by the rebels for the northern part of the country was surprising to many analysts. The rebels have been perpetrating horrific crimes against humanity and have invited fighters from Sudan and Western Sahara to help boost their defences.

Although instability existed prior to Ethiopia's civil war, which began in November 2020, the conflict has since increased momentum and ferocity. By December, the federal government was seeking to stop the Tigray People's Liberation Front and its allies from approaching Addis Ababa, Ethiopia's capital. In many regions of the country, a humanitarian crisis was brewing. Former President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria has been the leader of African Union's (AU) efforts at resolving the knotty security issues though much progress has not been recorded.

The terrorist attack in Uganda in 2021 demonstrates the vulnerability of Central Africa, East Africa, and the Horn of Africa to violent extremism. The possibility of an alliance between the Allied Democratic Forces and al-Shabaab is deemed disturbing. Since the end of 2017, an extremist insurgency has been raging in Cabo Delgado and the deterioration of the security situation has posed challenges to regional stability, especially with suspected linkages to Tanzania and the potential for the insurgency to extend to build a network of insurgencies along the eastern edge of the continent. The resumption of attacks in northern Cote d'Ivoire near the border of Burkina Faso also shows that the threat of violence is imminent from the Sahel to West Africa's coastal countries. Cote d'Ivoire is currently undergoing a series of attacks and there is fear that violent extremism could spread to other parts of the country as well as neighbouring countries like Ghana, Benin, and Togo (Babatunde et al,

2022).

According to a research by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2005), most of the nations at the bottom of human development rankings have recently ended or are in the midst of internal conflict. As a result, today's conflicts in Africa are linked to the complex issues of development and the distribution of resources. Africa has experienced several development hurdles for years. These hurdles range from extreme poverty, violence, underutilised agriculture, infrastructure, lack of access to credit, social fractionalisation, poor health facilities, poor education to catastrophic civil unrest, all of which are linked to illiteracy, weak institutional capacities and exploitation by corrupt and brutal leaders. These barriers prevent Africans from encountering and supporting Africa's long-term development and recovery.

Unfortunately, rather than spend their limited resources on developmental projects, most of these countries spend a significant amount of their money on military hardware and armaments. The global reality, and Nigeria is a ready example, of countering insecurity is the weaponisation of security. This process largely consists of investing huge sums of money in acquiring weapons and maintaining an arms race to deal with real or perceived security concerns. This situation has constituted a threat to the world as every country tries to acquire weapons for its national security and interest. The 50 largest recipients of major weapons are thus, including seven African countries: India, China, Pakistan, United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, United States, Australia, South Korea, Singapore, Algeria, Turkey, Morocco, Vietnam, Venezuela, Egypt, United Kingdom, Iraq, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan and Malaysia. Others are Indonesia, Myanmar, Japan, Norway, Syria, Portugal, Taiwan, Brazil, Chile, Netherlands, Bangladesh, Germany, Canada, Columbia, Thailand, Israel, Spain, Qatar, Sudan, Jordan, Italy, Uganda, Poland, Oman, Mexico, South Africa, Sweden, Finland and NATO (SIPRI, 2014; Adedimeji, 2015).

For Africa to be able to tackle the monster of insecurity, the human security approach, rather than just state or national security, is desirable. This is the type of security that encompasses and emphasises human

development, human protection, and the protection of every citizen of a state their fundamental rights and freedoms, regardless of ethnicity, age, gender, religious or political affiliation. As a result, adopting the human security paradigm necessitates a holistic approach to the empowerment and emancipation of individual citizens of a state as it concerns the protection of individuals from risk to their physical or psychological safety, dignity and well-being.

Licklider (1995) argues that ending a conflict by any method, be it signing a peace accord or using a power-based approach (military triumph), does not imply that peace has been achieved. It does, however, provide a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to create an atmosphere of lasting peace and seek to build a strong nation by fighting corruption; focusing on and investing in economic sustainability; fighting poverty; creating jobs; making the most of domestic resources to end poverty; protecting communities; ensuring equity and fairness; unleashing the potentials of people—especially the youth; and unleashing the potentials of institutions and natural resources; It also includes teaching the next generation, all of which contribute to human security by safeguarding and empowering people on an individual and community level.

### **Levels of Saving Humanity from Atrocities**

It is evident the world today is facing acute crises and human suffering is at its peak. Africa especially illustrates the tragedy of the human condition and the way forward is to look backward in order to rediscover the values that made life more abundant and fulfilling. This is at the personal, social, communal, national and international levels.

At the personal level, we should be guided by the four values that guarantee peaceful living, which are truth, love, justice and forgiveness. Love for instance is key to having inner peace and as Nelson Mandela said, “No one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite.” If individuals can adhere to these four values alone, they will achieve tremendous success. In addition, having the attitude of gratitude, contentment and discipline

would make Africans better individuals and make humans more humane.

At the social level, which subsumes orientation and training, there is an urgent need to promote and advance peace education, which is described as education for authentic security. Peace education is “the process of acquiring values, the knowledge and developing the attitudes, skills and behaviours to live in harmony with oneself, with others, and with the natural environment.” Ten key words from the definition are process, values, knowledge, attitudes, skills, behaviours, harmony, oneself, others and environment. In this regard, peace education would develop in the society values, knowledge, insights, attitudes and skills to live in harmony with oneself, one's God, other people and the natural environment.

At the communal level, every community or society in Nigeria has pristine values that used to bind the society together. The Yoruba have the concept of “Omoluabi”, someone who is hard working, diligent, responsible, serious-minded, fair, honest, trust-worthy, kind, respectful and Godly in all his activities. An Omoluabi values good name more than gold and s/he is a symbol of everything good and admirable”. Among the Fulani, everyone is supposed to have “Pulaaku”, a term connoting bashfulness or having a sense of shame; patience, tolerance and perseverance; kindness and affection for others; manliness and bravery as well as dignity and self-respect. Then, the Igbo have the concept of “Ezigbo mmadu” which means good character or moral conduct. A person with Ezigbo mmadu is a role model who should be emulated by all as the best of the community or society.

At the national level, human security should be accorded topmost priority. The seven types of human security identified by UNDP (1994) should be institutionalised while the threats to them should be avoided.

Type	Meaning	Threat
Economic Security	Access to employment opportunities	Persistent poverty, unemployment
Food Security	Physical and economic access to food for all people at all times. Hundreds of millions of people in the world remain hungry either through local unavailability of food or, more often, through lack of entitlements or resources to purchase food	Hunger, famine
Health Security	Access to medical treatment and improved health conditions. Poor people in general have less health security and in developing countries, the major causes of death are infectious and parasitic diseases	Deadly infectious diseases, unsafe food, malnutrition, lack of access to basic health care
Environmental Security	Living in healthy physical environment which is spared from desertification, deforestation and other environmental threats that endanger	Environmental degradation, resource depletion, natural disasters, pollution
Personal Security	Individual security from physical violence. Threats can take several forms. For example: threats from the State, foreign states, other groups of people (ethnic tension) individuals or gangs; threats directed against women or children based on their vulnerability and dependence; threats to self (e.g. suicide, drug use, etc.)	Physical violence, crime, terrorism, domestic violence, child labour
Community Security	Most people derive their security from membership of social groups (family, community, organization, political grouping, ethnic group, etc.) Tensions often arise between these groups due to competition over limited access to opportunities and resources.	Inter-ethnic, religious and other identity-based tensions
Political Security	Living in a society that guarantees basic human rights and freedom of expression.	Political repression, human rights abuses

### **Components of Human Security (Adedimeji, 2015)**

At the international level, there should be a renewed commitment to the international system at various layers as no country is an island. The protocol and objectives of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union (AU) should be pursued by member countries in such a way that cooperation would be achieved and conflict would be avoided. Conflict prevention mechanisms should be put in place at the not only within Africa but at the global stage at the level of the United Nations so that invasions would be avoided and no country would threaten another.

Humanity should be the centrestage of the humanities. Therefore, those who choose to devote their lives to the study of literature, language, art and music, philosophy, religion, and history are the guardians of the human race. They are the future as they have had the audacity to choose interpretation over calculation, recognising that computation cannot present an accurate, profound, or comprehensive image of self-interpreting beings like ourselves. This is intrinsically linked to international development, to the point where governments all over the world and international development agencies require the services of humanities experts and researchers, who, by their very nature, are malleable and adaptable, to articulate the appropriate foundation of knowledge on which policies and human welfare interventions can be better implemented.

All of humanity is always in need of the capacity to grow in the right proportion and the ability to judge well the things of earth; and it is in the cultivation of the humanities that the human person can develop by mastering history and deploying knowledge to the advancement of the common good. Understanding human values and how they translate to knowledge, attitudes, policies, and technologies for the improvement of comfortable living and the general good is aided by studying the humanities.

Humanity as a whole is always in need of the ability to grow in the proper proportions and the ability to judge well the things of this world; and it is through the cultivation of the humanities that the human person can develop by embracing peace and avoiding atrocities of conflict. Understanding human values and how they translate to beliefs, attitudes, policies, actions and technologies for the improvement of comfortable living and the general good is aided by studying the humanities.

### **Conclusion**

Africa, like some other parts of the world, is at a crossroads between technocratic present and the relatively peaceful past. While the gains of science and technology have made life much easier to those who can pay, the fact remains that humanity is receding and life is frustrating for millions of people. As it is argued, money can buy a house but not a

home, it can buy a bed but not sleep; it can buy a clock but not time, it can buy a book but not brains; it can buy food but not appetite; it can buy blood but not life. In spite of all the development, human beings are sadder and much unhappier. The forces are not just aligning and a factor for this is the relegation of the humanities in the assumption that science solves all problems.

The paradox of this age is articulated by George Carlin (1937 -2008) as and it is truly worrisome that in our time in history,

...we have taller buildings but shorter tempers, wider freeways, but narrower viewpoints. We spend more, but have less, we buy more, but enjoy less. We have bigger houses but smaller families, more conveniences, but less time. We have more degrees but less sense, more knowledge but less judgement, more experts but more problems, more medicine, but less wellness.

We drink too much, smoke too much, spend too recklessly, laugh too little, drive too fast, get too angry, stay up too late, get up too tired, read too little, watch TV too much, and pray too seldom. We have multiplied our possessions, but reduced our values. We talk too much, love too seldom, and hate too often.

We've learned how to make a living, but not a life. We've added years to life but not life to years. We've been all the way to the moon and back, but have trouble crossing the street to meet a new neighbour. We conquered the outer space but not inner space. We've done larger things, but not better things.

We've cleaned up the air but polluted the soul. We've conquered the atom, but not our prejudice. We write more, but learn less. We plan more, but accomplish less. We've learned to rush, but not to wait. We build more computers to hold more information, to produce

more copies than ever but we communicate less and less (Adedimeji, 2015).

It is important that attention be drawn to the desideratum of focusing on the human in humanity as the disciplines of humanities are re-appraised to serve our decadent civilisation better. The civilisation is decadent because the advancement in techno-scientific development has not translated to the much needed peace and tranquillity in human relations. Rather, human suffering continues to increase as violent conflicts, contestations and insecurity continue to wreak havoc on societies and countries. Changing the narrative begins from the individual commitment to the principles of truth, love, justice and forgiveness in relating with others while efforts should be doubled at social, communal, national and international levels to promote peace and champion human security. It is crucial to purge the mind of excessive materialism and demonstrate that money, science and technology, reason, and measurement are only tools that must be supplemented with the values enshrined in indigenous cultures and traditions of Africa.

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