

## Governance, Violence and the Challenge of Internal Security in Rivers State, Nigeria

Agwanwo, Destiny Eze; Bello, Ibrahim

Veröffentlichungsversion / Published Version

Zeitschriftenartikel / journal article

### Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:

Agwanwo, D. E., & Bello, I. (2019). Governance, Violence and the Challenge of Internal Security in Rivers State, Nigeria. *The Nigerian Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*, 17(1), 35-47. [https://doi.org/10.36108/NJSA/9102/71\(0130\)](https://doi.org/10.36108/NJSA/9102/71(0130))

### Nutzungsbedingungen:

Dieser Text wird unter einer CC BY-NC-SA Lizenz (Namensnennung-Nicht-kommerziell-Weitergabe unter gleichen Bedingungen) zur Verfügung gestellt. Nähere Auskünfte zu den CC-Lizenzen finden Sie hier: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/deed.de>

### Terms of use:

This document is made available under a CC BY-NC-SA Licence (Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike). For more information see: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0>

# Governance, Violence and the Challenge of Internal Security in Rivers State, Nigeria

Destiny Eze Agwanwo<sup>1</sup>

Ibrahim Bello<sup>2</sup>

Department of Sociology<sup>1</sup>  
University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria

Department of Sociology<sup>2</sup>  
Bayero University, Kano, Nigeria

---

## **Abstract**

*Governance, the world over, has become the main framework for assessing the effective utilization of human and material resources for the development of a nation or an organization. This paper explores the link between governance failure, violence and its implication for internal security in Rivers State. The level of violence in the state is high and increasing particularly since 1999 when the nation returned to civil rule. Violence such as inter and intra communal conflicts, cult violence, armed robbery, kidnapping, political violence among others, now writ large in the state. The study utilized the qualitative and content analysis. The paper reveals that the pervasive nature of violence with negative effect on the internal security is the fall out of the failure of the governance in the state. The paper recommends, among other things that, good governance is a tool for empowering the people, which in turn, will reduce unemployment, poverty, marginalization and the recourse to violent aggression in the state.*

**Keywords:** Governance, governance failure, violence, security, internal security, state and Rivers state

## **Introduction**

Democratic government/state the world over is about social contract with citizens. The most important aspect of this social contract is in the area of providing and maintaining law and order for citizens. Section 14(2a) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria clearly states that “the security and welfare of people shall be the primary purpose of government”. These laudable aspirations are guaranteed through the process of governance. The state, and indeed, the Nigeria state, utilises its various institutions to ensure the security of lives and property and welfare of her citizens.

Good governance is very vital in the efficient management of human and material assets of a nation advance her set objectives. Therefore, a nation’s ability to enjoy peace, security, social welfare and development is inextricably linked to good governance (Nwanegbo, 2016). However, since 1999, when Nigeria returned to democratic government, peace, security, social welfare, development and good governance have eluded many Nigerians. As Achebe (1983), Ekekwe (2011), Nwanegbo (2016) and Agwu and Igwe (2016) had

observed, these challenges are as a result of the dearth of leadership and good governance at all levels. The absence of good governance leads to myriads of social problems such as bribery and corruption, kidnapping, armed robbery, insurgencies in the North-East and militancy in the Niger Delta, among others. In the Niger Delta, the challenge of governance has become very visible through the number of unemployed youth, illiteracy, oil host community and oil company conflicts, oil workers kidnapping, pipeline vandalism, oil bunkering and its impact on the environment; electoral malfeasance, among others have characterised the Niger Delta and indeed the Nigerian situation.

Rivers State, is a hub of oil and gas activities in Nigeria and, is highly enmeshed in the crisis of violence. This crisis started as agitations emanating from the years of neglect of the area by the Nigerian state and multinational oil firms, in spite of the oil wealth it generate which later became politicized and criminalized. Horsfall (2012), Dikewoha (2016) and Joab-Peterside (2017) have described the state as the epicenter of violence in the Niger-Delta. Violence such as kidnapping, election related violence, cult violence, armed robbery, inter communal and intra communal conflicts, among others, have come so widespread, making the state one of the unsafe states in Nigeria. This paper argues that the absence of good governance is responsible for the increasing rate of violence in the state. From the foregoing, the questions that arise are: have the government in the state fulfilled their constitutional mandate of securing lives and property of people? Are the governed provided with adequate welfare services? Has the absence of good governance spawned violence in Rivers state? To buttress this argument, this paper examines the impact governance failure on violence in Rivers state.

### **Thematic Conceptual Framework**

The main concepts in this study will be clarified. They are governance and violence.

**Governance:** The term governance and government are often used interchangeably. Taylor (1997) sees governance as the maintenance of order and social justice. It is the utilization of state resource for the common good of the people. Natufe (2007) as cited Okereke (2012: 169) define governance as ‘the processes and systems by which a government manages the resources of a society to address socio-economic and political challenges in the polity’. Also, Ikpi (1996: 19) conceive of it as the “total ability to organize, synthesize, and direct the various actions of the working parts of government machinery in order for such a government to perform meaningfully, creditably and acceptably. Thus, governance involves both governing class and the governed people; and good governance must of necessity be democratic, entail popular participation by the people, be accountable and ensure basic freedom”. Governance is the ability of a government to make and enforce its rules and to ensure social service delivery regardless of the nature of the state (Fukuyama, 2013). Aside from the state centric notion of governance, it also applies to the

corporate world to ensure corporate governance. Also, the term governance according to Kaufmann (2000) can be bifurcated in three categories with each having two aspects such as:

1. (a) voice and accountability which includes civil and political liberties and freedom of the press, and (b) political stability and lack of violence.
2. (b) Government effectiveness which includes the quality of policymaking and public service delivery, and (b) lack of regulatory burden.
3. (c) The rule of law that includes protection of property rights and an independent judiciary and control of corruption.

However, irrespective of the notion the concept is applied, governance is very crucial in actualising the needs of people whether at the community, state, national, international or corporate level. In this paper, therefore, governance is used to refer to the process by which the government in the state manages its human and material resources for the good of the majority, maintain order and protect the lives and property of citizens. These aspirations can only be realised when governance and the policies of the government are purely people oriented. Good governance ensures that the government pursues programmes and policies that will guarantee the ultimate good of the masses. Where this is lacking, the peoples' confidence in the government will wane, giving room for disillusionment, anger and may result into taking to violence. It is on this instance that we can say that "what we have been witnessing in Nigeria in the few years is actually the failure of the state and the collapse of governance. The average Nigerian seems to have lost confidence in the capacity of those in power to protect lives and property (Ehusani, 2002) as cited in (Ekanem, 2009: 40)."

**Violence:** Anifowose (2004) observed that the concept "violence" does not have a strait-jacket definition, and so it does not lend itself to a generally accepted definition. He however posit that it is used to identify many forces such as, militancy, coercion, destruction and aggression directed against persons, properties and symbols of perceived sources of discontent. To him, violence includes such phenomena as riot, armed robbery, arson, guerilla warfare, civil war, coup d'etat, assassination, insurrection, rebellion, revolution and the likes. For Udeinya (2011), the definitional impasse relating to 'violence' as a concept is based on the legality or legitimacy and illegitimacy in the application of violence centered on the physical aspect of violence in its many dimensions. Galtung (1996) in his perception viewed violence as any form of social injustice, whether inflicted by individuals, or by institution or by the workings of society at large, and whether or not it involves the deliberate infliction on persons.

The World Health Organization (WHO, 2002) conceived violence as the willful use of physical power or force, threatened or actual, against another person, or against a group or community, that either causes or has a high likelihood of causing injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development or deprivation. Violence can be pigeonholed based on the goal the use of or threat of force is expected to achieve. For example, we can talk of political violence if the goal is to gain a political advantage; domestic violence, if the end is to get undue domestic advantage which often causes anguish and harassment; religious violence, if the aim is to achieve religious advantage; economic violence, if the end is to get economic advantage, revolutionary violence, if the goal is change or maintain the status-quo, and criminal violence, if the end is to achieve personal or group criminal advantage.

Perspectives on the nature and characteristics of violence abound. Udeinya (2011) and Alade (2012) identified the legitimist and the structural theories of violence. The main concern of the legitimist theorist is on the legality or illegality of the use of force or violence. Hook (1974, cited in Udeinya, 2011) following the legitimist suasion, sees violence as the illegal deployment of methods of physical coercion for personal or group ends. This aspect of violence is mainly employed by two categories of people- those empowered by law to use violence as a means of furthering the 'common good' of the 'people' or for themselves, particularly the state and its law enforcement apparatus like the police and the armed forces, and those not legally empowered to do so, especially the criminal elements in society. The idea of legitimacy in the context of the Nigeria may vary with what is obtainable in advanced democracies where high value is placed on issues of human rights and the welfare of citizens, than in Nigeria where the state uses violence against her citizens. According to Udeinya (2011), one major flaw of the legitimist theory of violence is that it ignored psychological violence which is more dangerous than the physical violence.

Structural violence on the other hand, is a more enduring form of violence. It is a form of violence that is structural based on the socio-economic inequality that is embedded in society (Galtung, 1996). Barash and Webel (2002) noted that structural violence involves the act of denying people of what is due to them economically, socially and politically, which in turn, erodes their self-worth. They underscored further that it takes place when:

People starve to death, or even go hungry, a kind of violence is taking place. Similarly, when humans suffer from diseases that are preventable, when they are denied descent education, affordable housing, opportunity to work, play, raise a family, and freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, then a kind of violence is occurring even if no bullets are shot or clubs wielded. (Barash and Webel, 2002: 7)

The embedded nature of structural violence is what triggers physical violence in society as those who are denied the means of realizing their self-worth

would want to resist this condition at all cost. It is in the light of the above that Ehrlich and Ehrlich (1970) as cited in Alade (2012) noted that structural violence come with eruptive effort by the underdogs to get out of the structural iron cage intact. This attempt by the oppressed to emasculate themselves from exclusion, marginalization and oppression is responsible for the widespread violence in society. Violence, in whatever form it appears, is the greatest enemy of humanity, particularly, in a democratic system (Keane, 2004).

### ***The State and the Phenomenon of Violence***

Alavi (1991: 1) proclaimed that the “state is back in fashion”. This assertion is against the backdrop of some scholars who had barely recognized its existence and significance, treating it as epiphenomenal. The states in modern societies are vested with enormous powers to maintain the internal and external sovereignty of their nation. The power of the state over individuals and group is total, and is evident in the function of the state to issue both birth and death certificates when and where necessary (Held, 1983; Agwanwo, 2015). The state in Nigeria, like other states in Africa, emerged from the ruin of the many years of colonial subordinating and exploitative system.

The colonial state in Africa, by all standards, was one of most brute, plundrous, oppressive and alienating state. The colonial state had the power of life and death and was limitless in its sphere of influence in the colony. It was also a state that wielded the monopoly of violence. The new state, that is, the post-colonial state in Nigeria has all the features of its colonial counterpart (Ake, 1981). One of the main features of the state lies in its capacity or its monopoly of the instrument of legitimate violence within a defined territory. As Ake (1981: 36) rightly observed, “what distinguishes the state from other social institution is that, apart from being the ultimate coercive power, it makes exclusive claim to the legitimate use of force”. The post-colonial state, like its colonial counterpart was established through the instrumentality of violence (largely by gun and electoral fraud) and lacked and still lacks legitimacy. Thus, “since the colonial state was for its subjects, at any rate, an arbitrary power, it could not engender legitimacy even though it made rules and laws profusely and propagated values. It presented itself as an apparatus of violence, had a narrow social base, and relied for compliance on coercion rather than authority” (Ake, 2003: 3). Weber (1978) explains that the overriding reason for the monopoly of legitimate use of force by the state is to effectively police a given territory and maintain or impose social order.

The notion of legitimate violence as an instrument of coercion by the state in Nigeria has been deployed in an illegitimate manner both in terms of its physical and structural dimensions. The political history of Nigeria is replete with many forms of physical violence by the state. The Nigerian civil war of 1967-1970, the Bakolori saga of 1974, the Umuchem invasion of the 1990, the Odi massacre of 1999 and the Ogoni genocide of 1990’s among others, are very clear instances of the illegitimate use of state coercive power. The Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have indicted the Nigerian

state over its excessive use of violence against innocent and helpless citizens on a daily basis, particularly by the Nigeria Police and Army (Peterside, 2016). Another way the state have employed violence against her citizens is at the structural level. The structural violence is a subtle form of violence and involves the enunciation of policies and programme that have the tendency to impoverish, discriminate, marginalise and disempower the majority of the people.

The deployment of the hard and soft violence (physical and structural) by the state, have inadvertently given rise to the use of physical violence by the weak and oppressed in society. The failure of state/governance have led to the emergence of non-state who have taken to violence as a means of drawing the attention of the state to her inability to fulfill the social contract entered with those they claim to serve or govern.

### ***Governance and the Phenomenon of Violence in Rivers State***

Popular understanding of the true essence of governance within a 'democratic' framework is that it ensures the security of lives and property of the citizen and to minimize the occurrence of violence and insecurity (Ekiran, 2006; Gilbert and Allen, 2014; Agwu, 2017). It is pertinent to state that, due lack of good governance; human societies are gradually gravitating toward violence as way of life, thus, making it a widespread phenomenon. In Rivers State, for example, violence writ large and manifests in diverse ways.

First, one dangerous aspects of violence in the state is that of inter and intra community violence. One clear case of inter-community violence was that of the Ogoni's and the Andoni's. This violence ravaged a lot of communities on both sides. Properties worth millions were lost. This conflict claimed well over five hundred lives, and many people were maimed. This conflict destroyed the economy of the warring communities, caused internal displacement and brought about untold hardship on them. Ke and Bille communities were also involved in inter-community conflict in 2001. This conflict by all standards was very violent in nature as no fewer than 100 persons lost their lives on both fronts, in addition to its toll on property as many houses were destroyed during the violent conflict (Human Right Watch, 2002). In a similar vein, this conflict in Rivers State also took the form of intra-communal violent conflict. One of the worst of its kind was the Ogbakiri violent conflict. The Ogbakiri intra-communal violent conflict started in 1999 and ended in 2005 with the existence of negative peace. Jimitoya (2011) reported that over eight hundred people lost their lives; while very few structures were standing. The source of the conflict was chieftaincy and land related.

Second, the burgeoning level of violent crimes also causes violence in the state. The state has had its fair share of crimes such as armed robbery, kidnapping, murder and rape, among others. The most worrisome of these are armed robbery and kidnapping. Kidnapping which was initially perpetrated by militants against foreign oil workers as a means of expressing many years of marginalization and environmental despoliation, has become criminalized.

With the exit of most foreign workers, criminal elements now kidnap young and old, rich and poor, for the purpose of getting ransom (Agwanwo, 2016). The crime statistics of the Rivers state police command, from 2012 to 2015 showed that 1,114 violent crimes were reported. A breakdown of this revealed that within the periods, armed robbery had a total of 260 occurrence, kidnapping had a total of 685 occurrence, murder had a total of 193 occurrences, while rape, had a total of 65 occurrences. Even though these figures are from police official reports, it is not a good reflection of the number of crime perpetrated in the state due to the fact that not all crimes are reported to the police. These crimes are perpetrated with the aid of firearm. John (2013) reported that 214 guns, 9522 round of ammunition and 584 cartridges were seized in the state by various security agencies in 2013. Also, in 2016 after the state's Amnesty Programme, there was a huge catch of arms from some criminal elements particularly the cultist. News Africa (2016: 31) reported that "911 assorted arms, 7661 assorted ammunitions and 147 explosives were surrendered by the cultist". Given the number of arms and ammunitions in criminal hands and the level of violence in the state, one cannot but agree with Igiebor (2015), the National Human Rights Commission (2015) and Dikewoha (2015) when they described Rivers State as 'Rivers of War'; 'Rivers of Violence' and 'Rivers of Blood' respectively, after the 2015 election in the state.

Third, the coercive apparatus of the state, the Nigeria police and the Rivers State Road Traffic Management (TIMARIV, a special traffic task force in the state), have in many ways been agents of violence in the state. The police have been engaged in monumental and momentous incidents of civilian brutality and other unethical behaviour that hamper their ability to carry out their constitutional mandates in the state. In 2015, a police officer shut a bus driver for refusing to part with fifty (50) naira at Whimpy junction. Also, Ezuma (2014) reported the case of a police officer (Police Corporal, Sunday Edeh) that stabbed a bus driver who refused to give him some money at a checkpoint. Also, in a radio programme aired by the Nigeria Infor, a highly tuned in radio station for public complaints, reveal that Rivers citizens seem to be dissatisfied with the way and manner the Nigeria police, particularly the men of Special Anti-robbery Squard have unleashed violence on innocent citizen at the various police checkpoints, on the streets and at the stations in the state. The reckless use of violence by men of SARS against the innocent and helpless citizens in the state has led to the public outcry against the agency to leave the state.

The Rivers State Road Traffic Management (TIMARIV), on the other hand, was a form of state police, created and operated under the administration of Chibuike Amaechi, the former governor of Rivers State. The manifest function of this body was to ease the challenge of road traffic in the state. Latently, TIMARIV, like the police, have also unleashed physical and psychological violence against motorist. The officials of TIMARIV are always in the news for all the wrong reasons, if not for alleged use of violence on road traffic offenders, then it is for extortion of motorist on the road all over the state



(Yafugborhi, 2013; Mbu, 2014). Chris (2012) stated that the activities of this state task force had rendered a lot of people jobless as a result of the way they were carrying out their task. It was touted that the fear of TIMARIV was the beginning of wisdom on the road in Port Harcourt.

Fourth, in recent times, also, cultism and cult wars have become the most visible source of nightmare/violence in the state. Even though cult groups exist all over the nation, its existence and manifestation in the state is very notorious. As a result of the widespread and violent nature of cult groups, the Governor of Rivers State, Barr Nyesom Wike in 2016 inaugurated an Amnesty Programme, under the leadership of Kenneth Chindah, with the mandate to interface with various cult groups in the state, retrieve arms from them and work out modalities for their reintegration into society. Chindah (as cited in News Africa, 2016: 31) noted “Cult groups exist in all local governments in the state and the battle for supremacy led to many killings”. Obe (2017) records that between April 29 and May 1, not less than 25 people had been killed as a result of cult rivalries in the state. These cult groups literally butchered their rivals/victim, kill and at its extreme, also beheaded them as the evidence of their spoils of war. As Theophilus (2017) observed, cult related violence or activities have claimed more than one thousand lives in the state since 2014. Equally too, the year started on very sad note for many families in Ahoada, with the gruesome murder of over 20 persons on the 1st of January, 2018 by some cult members. This act attracted global condemnation.

Fifth, politics and electoral process have exacerbated the already tensed environment in the state. Since the inception of the fourth republic, elections have never been violent-free. The climax of this situation, however, was the 2015 general election and the re-run elections in the state. These elections were the most violent in the country based on the reports of National Human Rights Commission and Stakeholder Democracy Network. The Stakeholder Democracy Network (2015: 2) for instance, reported that “violence had a serious impact on voters, election officials and party supporters... 19 persons were killed on Election Day with election observers able to confirm several of the most prominent deaths, notably, killings in Asari Toru and the assassination of APC leader Clever Orukwowo”. In a similar vein, the 2016 legislative re-run in the state was no least violent. Obe (2016) reported of the orgy of violence that characterized the election which we copiously cited below:

the list of casualties is still rising more than one week after the polls were conducted. Among those killed was a deputy superintendent of police, Alkali Mohammed, whose team was ambushed near Omouko in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni LGA by armed political hirelings. The attackers beheaded Mohammed and his orderly, killed three other members of his team...In Bodo, a party agent John Meebari, was shot dead for refusing to let go of ballot material to people that invaded the polling unit to snatch them. Eleven National Youth Service Corps members were

abducted in Akuku Toru LGA, while five of them were abducted with electoral materials at Emohua LGA. (*Obe, 2016: 19*)

The manifestation of this political brigandage and electoral violence in the state are coterminous with the politics of bitterness that accompanied the division of the political elites and their followers along the two leading political parties in the nation (People Democratic Party, PDP and All Progressive Congress, APC) with incompatible interests. “The State witnessed a bloody political battle between two frontline political parties in the state, the People’s Democratic Party (PDP) and All Progressive Congress (APC) over supremacy and control of the state. One of the first victims of the crisis was an anti-Governor Amaechi law maker, Mr. Michael Okechukwu Chindah, who was hit hard with a mace by the Leader of Rivers State House of Assembly, Hon. Chidi Lloyd, during a brawl on the floor of the House on July 9, 2013” (Joab-Peterside, 2016: 13). In recent time however, this politics of acrimony has assumed a more violent dimension between the seating Governor, Barr. Nyesom Wike and the Minister of Transportation, Chibuike Amaechi, both of whom are beneficiary of rivers politics.

### ***Understanding Governance Failure and Violence in Rivers State: Implication for Internal Security***

In the developed and developing societies, governments are assessed based on their ability to carry out the key function of governance, which are basically guaranteeing the security and welfare of the citizens. Therefore, in every country, governance is intricately linked to security and or violence. According to Simbine, Roberts, Benjamine, Danjibo *et al.* (2008) governance is linked to security such that good governance is anchored on the responsibility of the government in utilizing the apparatus of the state to cater for the needs of the populace. In the same vein, lack of it can erode the essence of government, and in fact, disconnect people from the government, which spawns violence and insecurity. When people are disconnected from participating and getting the benefits accruable from the process, violence and insecurity will ensue. Vohra (2007) noted that if internal security is not guaranteed, governance would elude the people and there would be grave threats to the very peace and stability of the entire system. Similarly, internal security cannot be in place if inefficient and corrupt leaders deliver governance. Egwu (2006) corroborated this when he asserts that:

the catastrophic episodes of poor governance evident in the perversion of the constitution and constitutionalism, subversion of the rule of law and institutions of probity for personal aggrandizement by political leadership in Africa and the attendant devastating challenges of development, poverty, insecurity and conflict underscore the import of governance on development and security. (*as cited in Oli, 2014: 20*)

The endemic nature of violence, such as mindless killings, inter and intra communal violence, political violence, cult violence, police violence and criminal violence (kidnapping, armed robbery, rape etc), among others, that characterize the daily lives of people in Rivers State, is as a result of the failure of governance in the state to guarantee the security and welfare of citizens. In Nigeria and indeed Rivers State, governance, to a very large extent, has impoverished the masses so much. Ake (1994) described this vexing condition as the democratization of disempowerment. This is because in any social system that “denies people the right to participate in the process of policy making and governance and skews economic activities in favour of the dominant class and their allies, unavoidably sows the seed of frustration, antagonism and violence” (Okoye and Alumona, 2014: 202).

In a democracy where the majority of the citizens are disempowerment or socially excluded from active involvement in governance, could breeds severe discontent among the people. This situation also prevails at the family, community, corporate and government levels. At whatever level, social exclusion is the process through which citizens are directly or indirectly prevented from participating in making decisions on issues that touch on their lives. This may take the form of, or result in, living at the edge of survival, inability of failure to participate in societal affairs leading life at the margin (Mamman, 1999).

Aside from the problem of social exclusion as a precursor to violence; bribery and corruption, illiteracy, unemployment, economic/political marginalization and poverty, among other factors, are major sign-post of governance failure that trigger unrest or violence that negatively affect internal security in the state. Horsfall (2013) observed that the security situation in the state had virtually broken down into anarchy; there are frequent and uncontrollable gunfights, shooting and killing in many part of the state. Adeyemi (2014) noted that the level of violence in Rivers State is very high. This has made the state to have the highest number of people/inmates on death roll among twenty (20) states of the federation.

The nature of Nigeria’s federalism is such that also create room for the perpetration of violence. This is particularly with reference to the structure of law enforcement powers. The structure of the law enforcement power is very centralized in the federal system and is evident when the Constitution stipulates that the Governors shall be the Chief Security Officers of their state, but in reality, it is a farce. In River State, the Governor does not have control of the Nigeria police in spite of the support the force get from the state. Rather, it is the federal government or the Inspector General of Police that dictates what they do or not through the Commissioner of Police in the state (Agwanwo, 2017). Adams Oshomole (2013) as cited in Okoye and Alumona (2015: 402) commenting on this state of affairs, quipped that:

the tool or institutions primarily responsible for security are federal institutions. The army, police, state security services and lately the civil defense corps. All these are federal agencies.

What a state government can do and what virtually all of us in varying degrees are doing is to try to provide supports. But what makes a system work is how we administer the carrot and the stick.

The above assertion points to the weakness in the Nigeria's federal system in terms of law enforcement. In other climes where true federalism is the practiced, the federating units are allowed to create or operate their own police system that will cater for the security needs of the federating states or units. This arrangement helps to reduce the level of crime and violence not only because the police will be at the beck and call of the head of the federating units, but due to the fact that police men/women will be drawn from people within the federating units. The advantage is that they have full knowledge of the terrain, understand the language and can gather intelligence report with ease (Agwu, 2017). The absence of this policing structure in Nigeria and indeed Rivers State is partly responsible for the high level of crime and violence.

The predominance of violence, perpetrated by the state and non-state actors have made the security in state to collapse. Incidences of armed robbery, cultism, politically motivated killings, kidnapping, militancy, among other manifestations of violence in the state have gravely compromised the security of lives and property in the state. In many parts of the state, human lives means nothing to others, as they at will kill, behead and even eat human body. Also, apart from the economic recession and its negative impact of the economic sector, which has made many companies to wind-up, the insecure nature of the state is also responsible for this condition.

### **Conclusion and recommendations**

This paper examined the issue of governance, violence and its impact on internal security in Rivers, Nigeria. Across the state, as evidently shown in this study, there is an up scaling of violence in the state since 1999. Violence such as political/electoral violence, inter/intra communal violence, cult violence, state/police violence, among others. These violent situations are partly made possible due to the absence of good governance at the community, local and the state government levels in the state. The failure of the government to provide security and welfare for the people as the primary function of any responsive government is responsible for the increasing incidence of violence in the state. This condition has affected the internal security situation of the state especially in the rural areas where governance deficits are more pronounced. Currently, armed robbery, kidnapping, ritual killings and cult-wars, among others form of violence, rite-large in the state with heavy toll on the lives and property of the people.

In order to address this prevailing situation in the state, good governance is recommended as an indispensable tool in solving the root cause(s) of the violence- the inability of the government to provide for the welfare of the

people in the state. Due attention should be given to creating job opportunities for residents and also create an enabling environment for people to work and do their business without molestation.

## References

- Agwanwo, D.E. (2017) Policing in federal political system and internal security framework: Lessons for Nigeria. *Jos Journal of Social Issues*, 10(1): 33-44.
- Ake, C. (1994) *Democratization of disempowerment in Africa*. CASS Monograph Series, No. 1 Port Harcourt.
- Alade, R.G. (2012) *Youths militancy as a bargaining tool for countering structural violence in the Niger Delta Region*. In Albert, I.O., Eselebor, W.A. and Danjibo, N.D. (ed.). *Peace, Security and Development in Nigeria*. Abuja Society for peace studies and practice.
- Alavi, H. (1991) *Reflections on the post-colonial state*. In Anikpo, M. and Alavi, H. (ed.). *State and development in the third world*.
- Babalola, A (2012) The Nigerian state and criminality among Nigerians. *State and Society*.
- Chris, N. (2012) *Rivers Anvers Allege molestation by Tima-Riv*. 1st March p8  
Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999.
- Dikewoha, P. (2015) *Rivers of blood: A chronicle of gruesome killings on poll days*. *The Nation*, Saturday, April 25 p17 -19.
- Ekiran, M.A. (2006) *Governance and political violence in Nigeria*. In Oyekanml, F.A.D. and Soyombo, O. (ed.). *Society and governance: The quest for Legitimacy in Nigeria*. Lagos: Ir-edo Printers.
- Ezuma, P. (2014) *Rivers State: Sacrificing Security on the altar of politics*  
Nigerian pilot. Wednesday, April 2 p22.
- Gilbert, L.D. and Allen, F. (2014) *Democracy and good governance: The missing Link in Nigeria*. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 5(16): 524-531.
- Human Rights Watch (2002) *The Niger Delta. No democratic dividend*. London.
- Irebor, N. (2015) *Rivers of war*. *Tell* September 14 p4.
- Jimutoya, O. (2011) *Peace returns to Ogbakiri after years of communal clashes*. *Vanguard*, November 19.
- Joab-Peterside, S. (2016) *Legitimate and Illegitimate use of force in the 2015 General Elections in Nigeria: The Case of Rivers State*. Cass Monograph.
- John, T. (2013) *Guns everywhere*. *The Sun* September 1 p15.
- Kaufmann (2010) *Governance matters: Worldwide governance successes, reversals and failures worldwide Governance indicators covering 213 countries over the 1996-2009 periods at [www.govindicators.org](http://www.govindicators.org)*.
- News Africa (2016) *Amnesty brings hope of peace*. December 13 p31.

- Nnoli, O. (1987) *Revolutionary violence, development, equity and justice in South Africa*. Paper presented at the International conference on Human Rights in Africa held in Port Harcourt, Nigeria, June 9-11.
- Nnoli, O. (2006) *National security in Africa: A radical new perspective*. Enugu: PACREP Publishers.
- Nwanegbo, J.C. (2016) *Democratic leadership and good governance in Nigeria*. In Okohe, A., Ibrahim, S. and Saliu, H. (ed.). Governance, economy and national security in Nigeria. Nigeria: Nigerian Political Sciences Association.
- Obe, E. (2017) Cultists dare Wike. Tell Magazine, May 15 p25-26.
- Okoye, I.K. and Alumona, I.M. (2015) Governance and the challenges of internal security in Anambra State, Nigeria, 1999-2013. Studies in Politics and Society. *Journal Publication of the Nigerian Political Science Association*, 2(2): 386-411.
- Oli, N.P. (2014) Nexus between good governance and national security in Nigeria. *Social Science Research*, 2(2).
- Stakeholders Democracy Network (2015) Why outcome of Rivers polls defies Logic. *The Nation* Tuesday, April 21 p2.
- Taylor, P. (1997) *The United Nations and international organizations*. In Bayliss and Smith, S. (ed.). The globalization of world politics: An Introduction to International Relations. New York Oxford University Press.
- Udeinya, M. (2011) Youth Militancy and sustainable development in the Niger Delta. In Peterside, D., Udeinya, M., Dakdo, D. and Onunwor, N. (ed.). Niger Delta Environmental Roundtable: A book of Readings. Lagos: Prestige Publishing.
- Yafugborhi, E. (2013: 20) TIMARIV. When Rivers goes to war against traffic offenders. March 13.