

INSECURITY IN NORTH-CENTRAL NIGERIA: BEYOND GRASS AND WATER

By

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Presented at the University of Mkar, Mkar

Security Round Table ,University Chapel.

5th June 2025



INTRODUCTION

Insecurity- Nigeria's biggest challenge.

Has multiple genres.

International, National and Sub-national.

More than communal disputes and clashes.

Multi billion dollar industry.

Nexus between insecurity and the illicit exploitation of natural and cultural resources.



INTRODUCTION (Cont.)



There are conflicting narratives but indisputable facts about Nigeria's security challenge.

Some facts;

- ✓ Some major actors are NOT Nigerians.
- ✓ Some from distances as far as 2,899 kilometers. (straight line distances/great circle distance)
- ✓ These "remote" actors are supported by Nigerians- (States, high ranking traditional rulers and businessmen.)
- ✓ *Actors are well armed and supported by helicopters and drones.*



INTRODUCTION (Cont.)



The government agencies entrusted with national security are failing.



The death toll/destruction is on the rise.



There is a humanitarian crisis as a result.



In the North-Central, banditry/Fulani militia/Boko-Haram and Jihadi groups are fusing into one group.



The Fulani of Nigeria are inviting their 'kit and kin' from other countries to invade Nigeria and stay.



Perpetrators have hardly been held accountable.



Nomadic pastoralism, banditry and cross border trans humans (CBT) at the core of illicit proliferation of small arms and military grade weapons.



INTRODUCTION (Cont.)



Innocent people are killed on their farms, in their sleep, in markets and worship places.



Nigeria has failed her citizens on account of insecurity.



Politicians are playing politics with the security of citizens.



Security management is over centralized.



There are no protocols for the involvement of the army in internal security.



Understanding the Nigerian Insecurity Situation

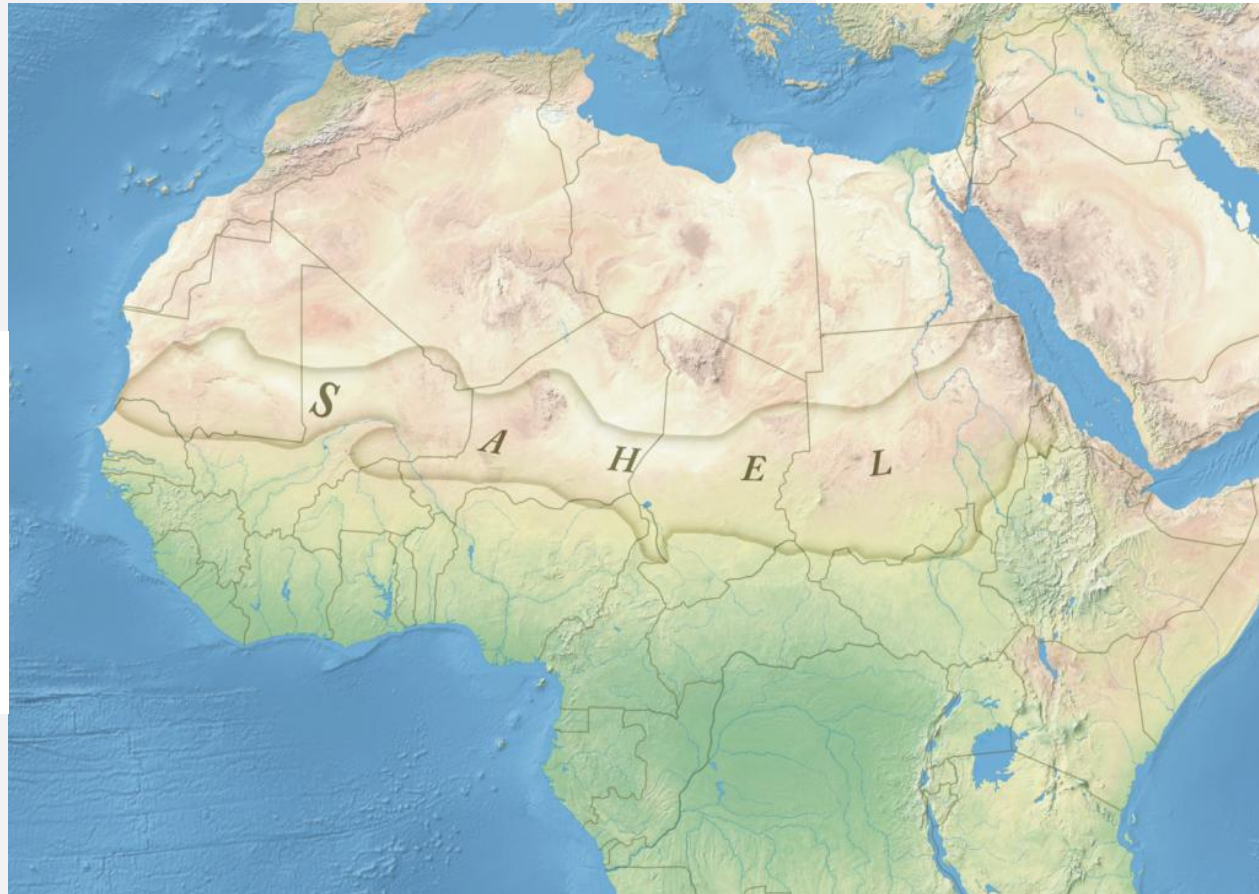
- Multiple explanations depending on region/area/politics
- Middle Belt as a coveted region. ('wastelands', food basket, mineral and resource rich region, fresh water capital of the country)
- Vulnerable and fragmented area.
- Environmental stress
- Jihadi incursions
- Illicit mineral and cultural exploitation
- State collapse
- The Sahel Ecosystem
- The foreign angle



Environmental Stress

- Desertification and pressure on the southern latitudes
- Peaceful nomadic groups in the Lake Chad area (Shuwa Arabs, Kanembu/Kanuri, Yedim, Buduma)
- Drier climes in North Africa and Middle East are keeping livestock.
- Population build up as a Red flag.

- ✓ Open borders/Open invitations
- ✓ Nature of Islam.



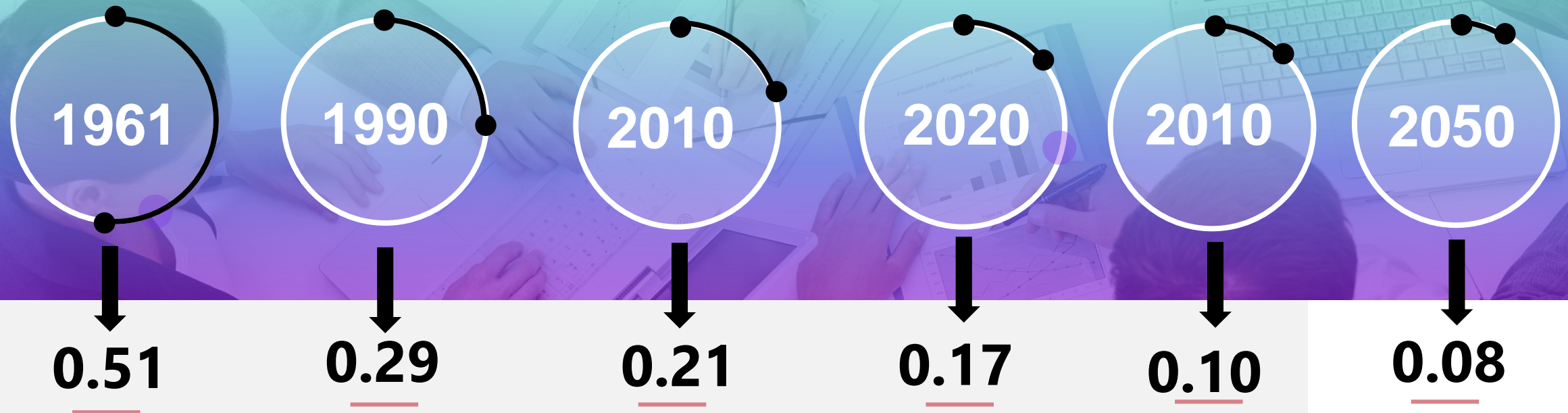
Islam and Numbers

- **Nigeria is one of the top 5 “Islamic countries” in the world.**
 - **Top Muslim country in Africa**
 - **In 1980, Muslims were 18% of world population**
 - **By 2000, (20%)**
 - **2023, (30%)**
 - **Northern population is swelling up (Open borders/invitations and marriage)**
- **2030 Nigeria will be 6th most populous country in the world.**
 - **The Nigerian Muslims will be 65% of the country’s population, majority will be youth (out of school children).**
 - **These will be susceptible to political Islam.**
 - **Muslims know the implication of this globally**



Numbers and Land

- Arable land in Nigeria shrinking since 1961 (Desertification/Population)



Hectares of arable land per citizen

- Whose land can you grab? Across countries? Sub national units, Local Governments or Districts?

The Jihadi Angle

Boko Haram, Fulani herdsmen/militia, bandits, Shiites all have Jihadi affiliations

Nigeria has a potent religious faultline.

From the Sharia debates to Maitatsina through the Sharia riots to Gideon Akaluka (1994), to Dogo Nahawa (2010), and Deborah Samuel Yakubu (2022).



The Jihadi Angle (Cont.)

The same faith tickets.

ISIS/ISIL/ISWAP all are implicated in the country's insecurity.

Fears of Islamic agenda are openly expressed.



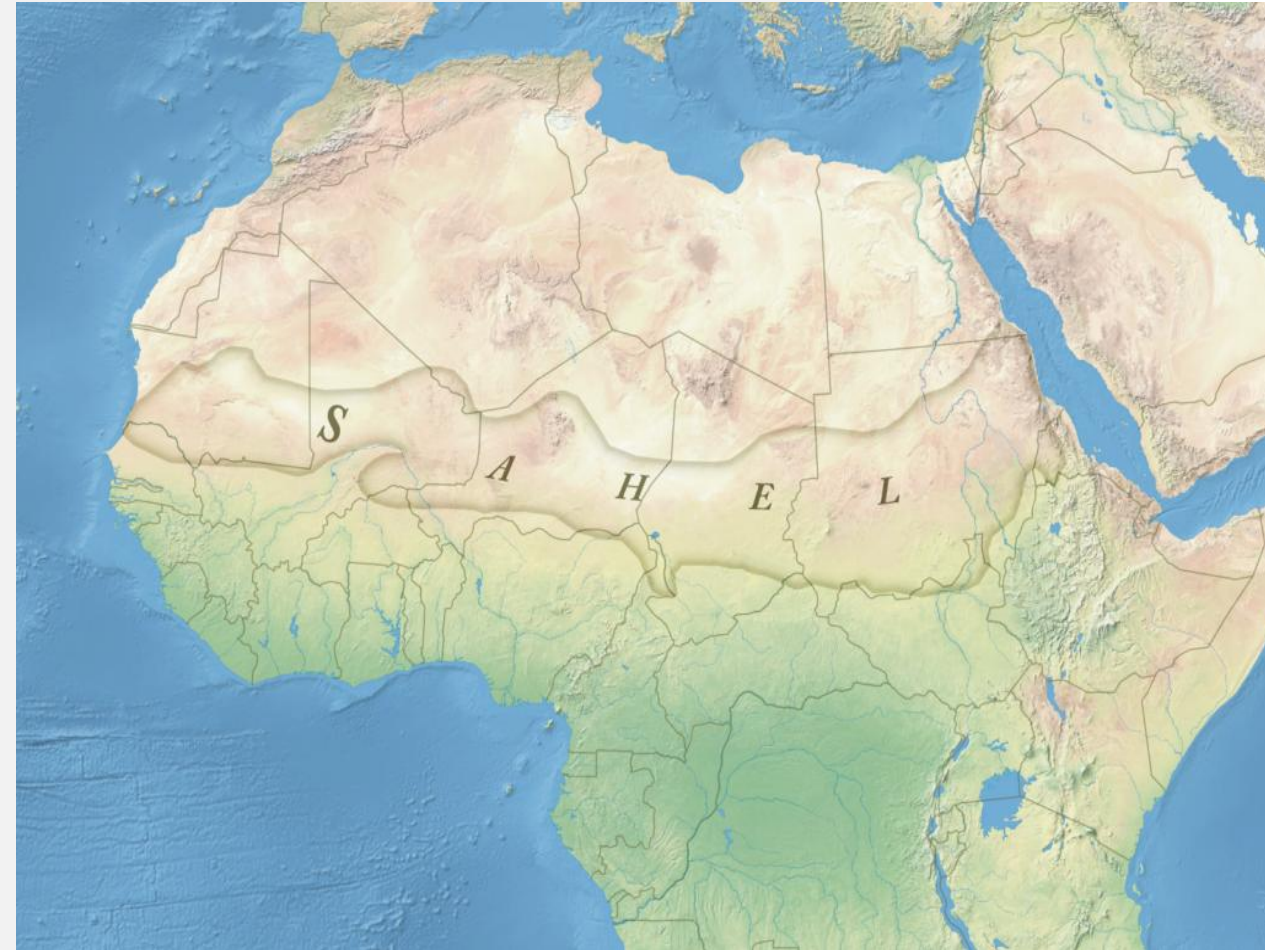
State Collapse

- Public perception of government as an inept rogue arrangement NOT to be trusted.
- NO free and fair election since 1999
- Arbitrariness, impunity, corruption and collapse of State institutions
- Weak/corrupt judiciary and legislature
- Inability of the security forces to secure the country and its citizens.
- Predominance of ungoverned spaces in different states
- Military grade weapons in the hands of non state actors.
- Nigeria on the failed state index.



The Sahel Ecosystem

- 3,053,200 square kilometers of land
- Stretches 5,900 kilometers from the Atlantic Ocean in the west to the Red Sea in the East.
- Desert and semi desert
- Core countries; Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger.
- Others; Chad, Senegal, Mauritania, Northern Nigeria, Cameroon (North), Central African Republic (North)



The Sahel Ecosystem (Cont.)

- **It suffers environmental stress and is volatile under several years of French and British exploitation.**
- **A breeding ground for Jihadi groups including:**
 - Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJWA)
 - Front de Liberation du Macina (FLM) also known as Kabita Macina (Mali)
 - Jama'at Nusrat Al-muslimeen (JNIM) in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger.
 - Ansaroul Isam (Burkina Faso)
 - Al mourabitoun (Mali)
 - Boko Haram (Nigeria, Niger and Chad)

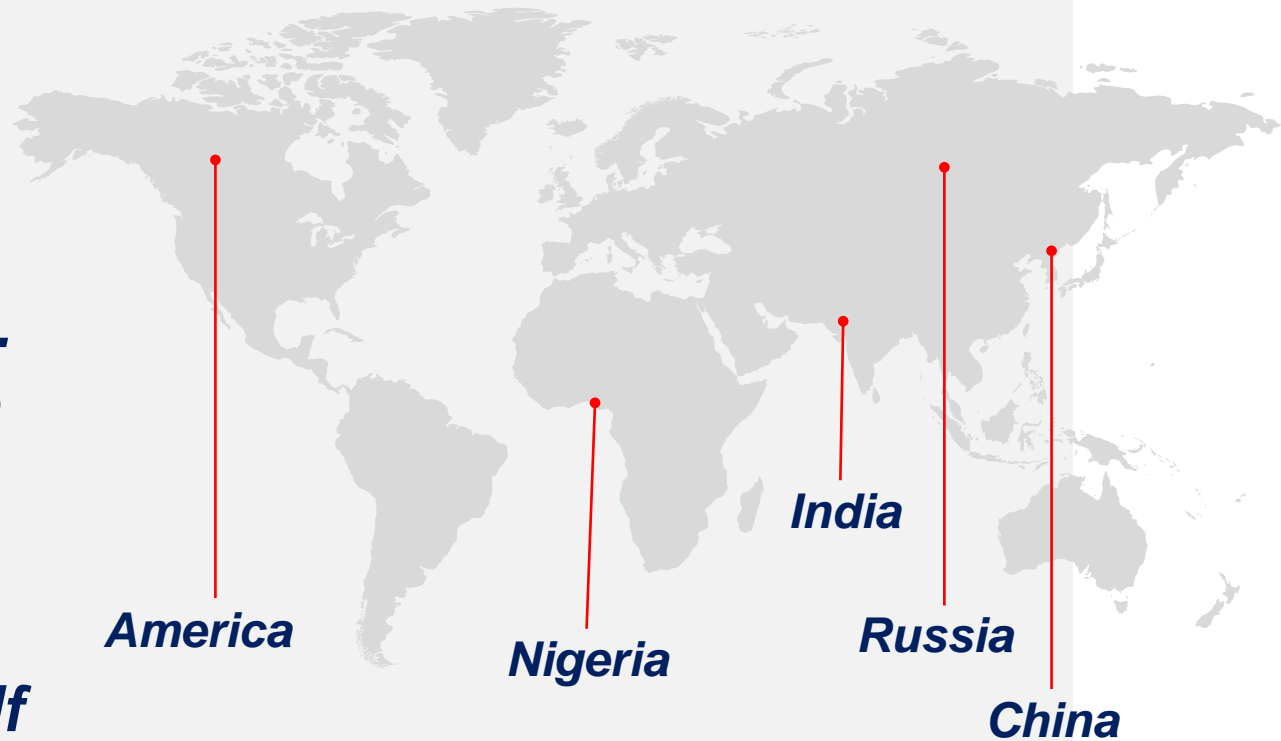
The Sahel Ecosystem (Cont.)

- Col Gaddafi of Libya until his death (2011) was the stabilizing factor in the Sahel.
- With his death, the Sahel is a boiling cauldron exacerbated by French fury following the “independence” of Burkina Faso et al.



The Foreign Angle

- *Nigeria is America's biggest trading partner in Africa.*
- *10 most populous country on earth.*
- *The biggest market dump for the industrialized countries.*
- *5 top supplies of oil to the US.*
- *The country's oil reserves are bait to China, Russia, Japan and India.*
- *Nigeria is at the center of an international rivalry at the Gulf of Guinea- with each country trying to "grab"*
- *Grabs are more successful with unstable polities.*



The Foreign Angle (Cont.)

- *Could the US for example be exploiting grievances and religion to sprout insurgencies and disintegration?*
- *If Nigeria breaks up, no constituent unit may be big enough to face a medium size European multinational.*
- *Are there lessons to learn from the break up of Yugoslavia, Soviet Union, the Collapse of Afghanistan and Libya?*
- *The use of CIA, NGOs and Local collaborators-useful idiots including armed groups*

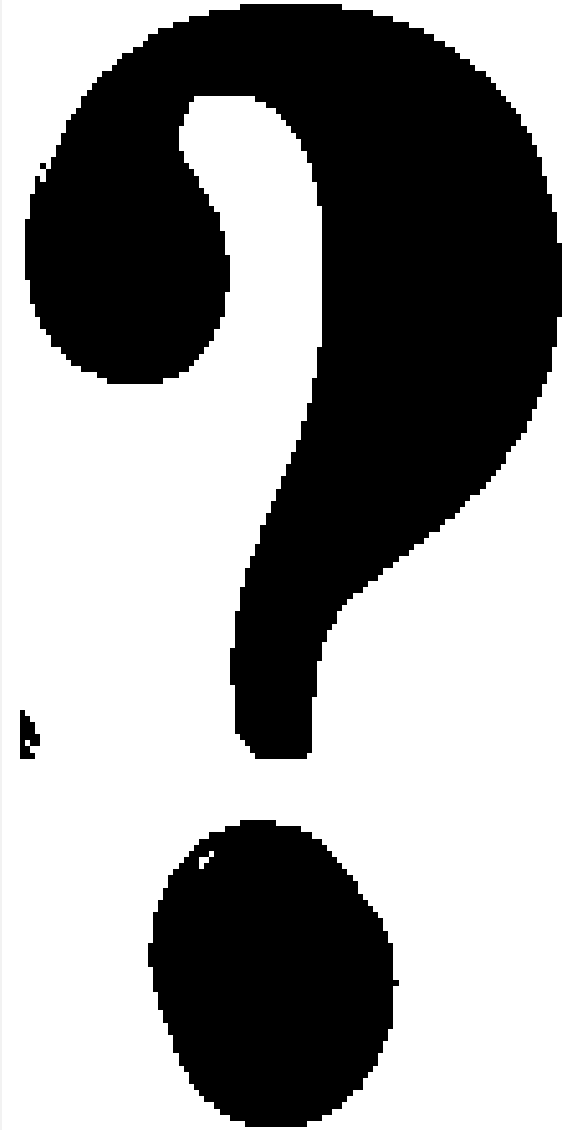


The Foreign Angle (Cont.)

- *UNITA in Angola, Contras in Nicaragua, RENAMO in Mozambique, Mujahidin in Afghanistan.*
- *Many argue that Boko-Haram is a CIA covert Operation.*
- *With Trump, we now know of USAID and its subversive role in Nigeria.*



- Why is NO state in the North-Central part of the country's National Humanitarian Response plan?
- Why is the Federal Government allowing an absolute livelihood to exist by force at the expense of crop farmers?
- Do foreigners have rights in Nigeria more than citizens?
- If we are being manipulated as Nigerians against each other, how can we redress our steps?
- How can we on the receiving end of insecurity- speak with one voice, have one narrative and rise up to ensure no one slaughters us in our sleep, on our farms and takes over our land?



- How can we get our political leaders to stand with the people on matters of insecurity?
- In states like Benue, attackers come from Nasarawa and Taraba. How can these neighboring states be held to account?
- How can we handle the nexus between insecurity and illicit mining/ insecurity and food production?
- If foreign terrorists are fighting deep into country and gaining territory, at whose instance are they fighting?



Cont.

- **The modern state is distinguished by personal prosperity, international and national boundaries.**
- **The country cannot exert allegiance from citizens if NON NIGERIANS can come in, kill, displace and take over ancestral lands.**
- **Nigeria must remain a plural/secular state.**
- **States of the North Central must be supported to flush ALL invaders UNCONDITIONALLY to make way for the return of IDPs.**
- **IDPs must be compensated and supported to reclaim their ancestral lands.**
- **States like Benue must enforce their anti-open grazing law while those without the law MUST enact them.**
- **The political class in the North-Central must unite to secure the region and its people**





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