

Buhari's Legacy of Incompetence, Corruption and Failure

by *Oshioma Imoudu*

President Muhammadu Buhari's tenure as Nigeria's military head of state lasted from December 1983 to August 1985 - a time of strict governance, a fight against corruption, but also criticism of his leadership style. During his first term, Buhari as a military head of state focused on anti-corruption, enforcing discipline, and promoting personal responsibility, which led to the arrest and imprisonment of politicians accused of corruption. However, his regime was accused of human rights abuses, and the War Against Indiscipline campaign in Lagos was criticised for excessive force. In terms of achievements during his first term, Buhari's government prioritized agriculture and rural development, curbed imports, and encouraged export-led growth. During this time, the administration created several institutions such as the Directorate of Food, Roads, and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI) and the National Council of Industries (NCI). Buhari also established the War Against Indiscipline (WAI), this was introduced to instill a sense of discipline among Nigerians, with many penalties enforced on the masses for not complying. The legacy of Buhari's military rule is a mixed one, with some praising his strong anti-corruption stance while others criticising his heavy-handed tactics and disregard for human rights. Despite criticism from some quarters, Buhari's influence as a military leader is undeniable, and his policies have continued to shape Nigeria's political landscape in the years since his first term.

President Buhari's first term as a democratic president started with his historic win in the 2015 elections, becoming the first opposition candidate to defeat an incumbent president in Nigeria's history. This gave Nigerians hope that their democracy was indeed on the right course.

Upon resumption, the President promised to focus on three major areas; Security, Corruption, and Economy. In driving economic growth, he launched various initiatives such as the Anchor Borrowers Program and the Social Intervention Programmes. However, the policies that could have spurred growth such as the Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP) were released too late to have any significant impact, and as such, the economy remained weak.

The fight against corruption witnessed some achievements with the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) recording successes in the arrest and prosecution of high-profile individuals who had looted public funds. However, the President also faced criticisms for being selective in the fight against corruption; with opposition leaders claiming that the government only



targeted its opponents. The President also faced challenges, with the country slipping into a recession twice, followed by the devaluation of the naira, creating a significant strain on the economy. The government was also accused of not doing enough to address the rising insecurity in the country, with terrorist attacks such as the Boko Haram insurgency and the herdsmen crisis spreading across the country. Despite these challenges, President Buhari was re-elected for a second term in 2019. In the subsequent years, the government continued with the policies from the first term, with a focus on infrastructure development and increasing power supply. However, the increasing debt profile of the country and rising inflation rates remain critical issues for the government.

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As we speak the man has not been convicted as he still moves around freely. The current AIR NIGERIA scandal that is currently rocking the Ministry of Aviation under Buhari s erstwhile Minister of Aviation, Hadi Sirika is of a monumental scale. The Federal House of Representative recently described the purported launching of the Aircraft as fraud and advised the current administration under President Bola Tinubu to immediately constitute a high level presidential committee to undertake a holistic review of the of the project that has gulp over N85.42 billion of tax payers money so far without anything concrete to convince the Nigerian people. This is a story for another day. In the area of security of lives and property it was on record that the Buhari administration was overwhelmed by the myriads of security challenges plaguing the nation as it has continued unabated even till now that he has left power. Despite Government efforts, the activities of Boko Haram, ISWAP, Unknown gunmen as well as bandits and terrorists is still very high as they have continued to wreak havoc on Nigerians. Just few weeks back over one hundred persons were killed by terrorists in Mangu/Bokkos Federal Constituency of Plateau State while another set of over 33 persons were killed by bandits at Runji Village in Zangon Kataf Local Government Area of Kaduna State.

President Buhari's legacy is one that has been fraught with mixed reactions and opinions. Although the administration implemented some policies and initiatives most of which unfortunately have not impacted the Nigerian economy positively and by implication the life of the average Nigerian. Under former President Buhari the

country continued to wobble as all the economic growth indices were negative coupled with lack of nationalism and patriotism in Nigeria's leaders; ineptitude in public sector management; excessive reliance on oil; lack of a comprehensive developmental plan; and a failure of leadership by the political class. His Government continued to borrow up till his last day in office. He left a huge debt profile of N80 trillion for the current administration.

In his eight years in office allegations of human rights abuses also dogged the Buhari administration. Human rights groups have accused security forces of extrajudicial killings, torture, and other abuses, particularly in their efforts to tackle terrorism and other security threats. The massacre of innocent Nigerians by

Nigerian Army and other Security Agencies that came out to protest during the ENDSARS protest at the LEKKI Toll Gate will ever remain indelible in the hearts of the entire Nigerians. The government has denied these allegations, but they continue to cause concern both in Nigeria and abroad.

The Fulani herdsmen crisis has been another contentious issue during Buhari's tenure. Clashes between herders and farmers over land and resources have led to numerous deaths and the displacement of thousands of people. Critics accuse the government of not doing enough to prevent these clashes or bring those responsible to justice.

Also, the government's contentious social media bill caused widespread controversy and criticism. The bill seeks to regulate social media and curb "fake news," but human rights groups and free speech advocates argue that it is an attempt to stifle dissent and restrict freedom of expression.

In all it is evidently clear from the testimonies of the down trodden and average Nigerian that the Buhari administration failed Nigerians in the area of security, economy and corruption which were the primary mantra of his promise to Nigerians. However, what his eight years in power has bequeathed to Nigerians is pain, agony, hardship, suffering and mass killings and destruction of lives and properties.

May Buhari never again happen to Nigeria.