

INSECURITY: STOP TERRORISM OR RESIGN, NIGERIANS TELL TINUBU

Nigeria is under siege of the terrorists. The nation's highways are no longer safe for travellers as commuters are kidnapped, taken into the bush and ransom demanded before their release. In some cases, the victims are still killed even after ransom has been paid. Several communities have been sacked and farmers denied access to their farms. Military formations and police stations are not spared. The terrorists have now taken their onslaught to the nation's seat of power in Abuja, invading the homes of residents in broad daylight kidnapping, killing and maiming.

Vice President Kashim Shettima has however attributed the root cause of insecurity in the country to corrupt governance by the leaders. The vice president made the remarks at the 10th Annual Sir Ahmadu Bello Foundation lecture and award hosted by Borno State governor, Prof Babagana Umara Zulum in Maiduguri. He was represented by his Special Adviser on political matters, Baba-Ahmed. His remarks elicited reactions from a cross section of Nigerians. While some aligned themselves with Shettima's claim and proffered what they perceived as the way forward, others berated the Nigerian leaders saying they should solve the problem or leave office, recalling their promises before and during their electioneering campaign.

It will be recalled that last month, terrorists invaded the home of Mansoor Al-Kadriyah in the Bwari Area Council of the Federal Capital Territory, FCT, abducting him alongside five of his daughters. His eldest daughter, Nabeeha Al-Kadriya, a 400-level Biological Science student of Ahmadu Bello University, ABU, Zaria was later killed when the father couldn't meet the deadline to pay the N60m ransom demanded. Few days ago, two monarchs in Ekiti state were abducted on the highway and later killed. In the same Ekiti, some school children who were being conveyed in their school bus were kidnapped last Monday with their teachers and the school driver. Similarly last Wednesday, many children were kidnapped in Benue

state. The children were among scores declared missing after armed herdsmen attacked Ugboju community in Agatu Local Government Area of Benue state and killed no fewer than 15 persons. Also, two teenage sisters were kidnapped last Sunday from the Guita community in Chikakore, Kubwa, Bwari Area Council of the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja despite the military and police presence in the vicinity. The kidnappers have demanded N30m ransom to release them. Reacting to the latest kidnappings, President Bola Tinubu, in far away France, as usual, was said to have ordered the Inspector General of Police to ensure the release of the school children and arrest the abductors. Nigerians can no longer sleep with their two eyes closed. They have therefore expressed their frustrations with some suggesting that if the leaders have no solution to the frightening wave of insecurity in the country, they should resign from office.

According to the renowned activist, Zik Gbemre, Coordinator, Niger Delta Peace Coalition (NDPC), "Is this not the same Shettima who said during campaigns that he would tackle insecurity and bring it to the barest minimum while his principal, President Bola, would restore a stable, productive economy? "Shettima and the entire government he serves as VP should resign from office and let others take over to try new ideas. Shettima, Tinubu or anyone serving the current administration were not elected to tell us problems we already know. They were elected to proffer solutions they boasted they would provide before the elections.

"Is there any Nigerian who doesn't know corruption is at the heart of the drivers of insecurity in Nigeria? Is there anyone who doesn't know that corruption is why the Nigerian military cannot fight armed gangs terrorising the entire nation even with effrontery to invade security formations including the NDA to abduct officers unhindered? "Shettima should stop telling Nigerians what they already know.

To tackle corruption is simple. Intensify genuine consequence action against corrupt officeholders. The solution is to try and punish



corrupt officeholders and their collaborators. Shetimma and the government he serves have no will to fight corruption. If they have no solution, they should resign. Also, Eric Omare, former President of Ijaw Youth Council (IYC) worldwide said: "It is correct that the root cause of most of our national problems including illiteracy and poverty in the north is as a result of corruption. However, the current leaders lack the political will to fight corruption. The leaders are only interested in grabbing power and enjoying the spoils of office without taking responsibility of fighting corruption. What is required to fight corruption is political will and nothing more."

Elder Joseph Ambakederimo, Convener, South South Reawakening Group, SSRG, said: "Vice President Kashim Shettima has inadvertently passed a no confidence vote on the government he serves. Did he forget that security is in the exclusive list under the purview of the Federal Government? Or is the Vice President accusing the state governors of misappropriation and misapplication of resources despite

escalating to the point of no control that we are in today? I think the government should stop giving excuses and work quietly to end insecurity. If you know who their leaders are, hit them, take them out of the equation. However you want to deal with them, deal with them. If you know your security apparatus has been compromised, then employ the services of mercenaries to deal with the problem of insecurity once and for all. If government is sincere, I think they should go beyond talking."

Abdul-Azeez Suleiman, Spokesperson of Northern Elders Forum said, "corruption is a concern that the Northern Elders Forum and many Nigerians share, as it is evident that endemic institutional corruption in most Northern state governments has contributed to the escalation of security challenges.. The Nigerian government must take decisive action to tackle corruption by the leaders in order to address the root cause of insecurity and banditry. First, there must be a comprehensive overhaul of existing institutional



allocating humongous resources as security votes with the security situation deteriorating daily? No one is holding anyone to account anymore. We are all in an organised chaos and heading for the cliff. If we do not allow the third tier of government to be functional then we should kiss the safety of this country goodbye. Until we allow the third tier of government to work we may not find peace, the constitution of our country has been violated with no end in sight, therefore we must call ourselves to order. An activist, Mr. Blessing Adima said: "I expect that by now, the Vice President will have all it takes to tackle banditry as he witnessed it when female students in Chibok were abducted under his watch as governor of Borno state. I expect him to meet with the President and give him a template to work with, because he has seen it. If he says it is corruption, who are the people? What is the work of the DSS? How much intelligence have they gathered? What have they learnt since 2014 when insecurity started

mechanisms involved in dealing with corruption. These include strengthening anti-corruption agencies, such as the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), by providing them with adequate resources, training, and independence to carry out their duties effectively.

Furthermore, the government must prioritize the reform of the judiciary and other critical institutions. Corruption finds it easy to thrive in these institutions due to weak systems and lack of accountability. By strengthening the judiciary and ensuring the appointment of competent and incorruptible judges, the government can send a strong message that corruption will not be tolerated. In order to effectively tackle corruption by leaders, the government should also promote a culture of transparency and accountability. This can be achieved through the implementation of robust anti-corruption policies, such as the enforcement of asset declaration by public officials,

***“We need to emphasize that money is not everything. Those who built houses that don't match their salary should be asked questions. We should be talking about firing squad for corrupt public officers. Those benefiting from corruption should also be prosecuted. Education should be free but even the education subsidy has been withdrawn. Students are dropping out of school and tomorrow they join gangs and become threat to everybody. If no serious and drastic measures are taken now to kill corruption the entire country might soon be consumed by the consequences of the monster. Nigerians may be patient for long but if they resort to violent uprising, everybody will be consumed”.*”**

the establishment of a public procurement system that is transparent and competitive, and the protection of whistleblowers. Moreover, the government should prioritize the recovery of stolen assets. This can be done by collaborating with international partners to trace and repatriate stolen funds and assets. The recovered funds can then be reinvested in critical sectors such as education, healthcare, and infrastructure, which will ultimately contribute to the overall development of the country.

In his submission, a security analyst, Frederick Akporuno said "the way out of the insecurity situation in the north is for the government to aggressively pursue reorientation programmes for the young ones from underprivileged homes. Political leaders have often than not promoted the leaders-servant relationship in the north. This has created a huge dichotomy between the haves and the have not. The ruling class encourages their children to embrace western education while children of the poor are not encouraged along similar pursuits. The result is part of the criminal situation we call banditry. Government should aggressively pursue western education for all the children to university level as well as focus on reorientation of the next generation".

A university lecturer, Prof Ekiyo Welson, simply said: "Government can do nothing as the government can never reform itself. The people should send all of them packing and create a brand new social and political structure through a brand new constitution." Majebi Amune, a legal practitioner, said "a government that is proactive lead by good deeds and by example. It will be highly commendable if the government put in place a committee which term of reference, among others, is to identify these leaders and their extent of culpability. After this is done, the government ensures they are prosecuted and their ill gotten wealth retrieved to the nation's treasury. The wealth

is a common heritage for all of us, it shouldn't be diverted by a few corrupt leaders. The government should also be audacious enough to blacklist the cronies of any identified corrupt leaders."

Professor Benson Osadolor, Former Acting Vice Chancellor, Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, said: "The Vice President is not being sincere with the situation in the North East, it has nothing to do with corrupt leadership, rather, it is an agenda that is perpetuated by a particular elite or a group of elites who want to use the situation first to corruptly enrich themselves and promote a kind of fundamentalist idea that is not yet known to Nigerians. He is a major player in north east politics. "Corruption has to do with those who are benefiting enormously from the defence budget for counter insurgency. We need good governance in this country and that has to do with government taking responsibility for its action which for now doesn't exist.

The Middle Belt Forum, MBF, said the government can successfully tackle the corruption of leaders that contribute to the growth of banditry and insecurity in the North when institutions are made strong and effective. According to the National President of MBF, Dr. Bitrus Pogu, "the Vice President had been in government (as governor) for eight years while insurgency and banditry continue to ravage his state till date. In spite of the establishment of EFCC and ICPC to fight corruption, political interest does not allow the institutions to work. There has to be a change of behaviour. Corruption will continue to thrive if no effort is made to strengthen the institutions.

The Co-chair of Interfaith Dialogue Forum for Peace, Bishop Sunday Onuoha, challenged public office holders and leaders in Nigeria to publicly disclose their sources of wealth. This, according to him, will demonstrate that government is sincere with the anti-graft war. Bishop

Onuoha who agreed with the Vice President that corruption is at the root of insecurity in the country, dared Nigeria leaders to declare the sources of their wealth and convince the disenchanted and frustrated youth population that they could be trusted. He said, "if Nigerians are sincere and honest, let every Nigerian and our leaders disclose their sources of wealth. People are frustrated and angry because of hardship in the land. Some people feel that those who have occupied public space have appropriated to themselves what should have gone round, and that is why people are suffering. So, let everyone come out publicly and disclose their sources of wealth". Bishop Opoko recommends capital punishment for corrupt public officers

Similarly the Methodist Archbishop of Umuahia Diocese, Archbishop Raphael Opoko, blamed the festering insecurity in the country on insincerity of leaders in the war against corruption. He, however, noted that it would be difficult for leaders to truly fight corruption when they themselves are also corrupt. The cleric dismissed the mouthed anti graft war as cosmetic and mere political rhetoric. He said: "If some people at the helm of affairs are corrupt, how do you think they can fight corruption? Corruption is however not limited to government circle, the monster has eaten deep into the fabrics of the Nigerian society. There is also corruption outside government including market women. We need a reorientation and to reinstate our value system.

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Public Analyst, Hon Ayo Fadaka, said, "the North is so comfortable about being the albatross on the neck of Nigeria. It remains a region where leadership is not about providing genuine social service, but about distributing tokenism to its people, an attitude that has since crept to the South as our own political class too, stricken by poverty of ideas are emulating them through their empowerment schemes. Unfortunately, Buhari affected Nigeria so much with this poor mentality, which manifested through the "Trader money" scheme disappointingly championed by erudite Professor Yemi Osinbajo as Vice President.

The creation of the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs further accentuated same corruption and entrenched it, and disappointing enough, President Bola Tinubu is still maintaining this poor frame and Nigeria continues to bleed. This is manifested through his poorly thought

palliative measures that they say targeted a class of Nigerians, but reached no one sufficiently, rather than create institutions that will bolster the economy, they sought to take refuge under an attitude of wholesale bribery that remains ineffectual.

Fundamentally, the North invested in the social deprivation scheme which created a class of children beggars, loitering at the premises of the wealthy for their daily sustenance and they use religion to sustain this anomaly. Those children, now grown into adulthood, reacting against their unjust upbringing and system are revolting, they are the bandits and terrorists of today. If cogent actions are not taken very soon, we can begin to forget Nigeria.

Former Ondo state chairman of Social Democratic Party, Hon Stephen Adewale said, "The best way to stop corruption is for our leaders to lead by examples by building a culture of integrity. Rhetoric will not solve the corruption until our leaders put their words into practice. In order to fight corruption the Federal Government must know the institutional tools that are available or that need to be created in the country. They have to understand the conditions that facilitate corruption because corruption is a cycle. To this effect, efforts have to be made to rebuild trust between the government officials and the general populace. If we don't rebuild trust, it will be very difficult to be effective in collective action. And we need collective action because the crises are intertwined, so leaders cannot fight the corruption alone. Mr Alake Moses, an Estate Valuer based in Ibadan said, "there's nothing new in what the vice president said. Successive leaders have been saying it. Let President Tinubu and his team begin from the National Assembly. The way they spend money now is a matter of concern. They should empower the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission, ICPC and Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, EFCC, the two organs created for the purpose of curbing corruption.

A business woman, Mrs Adetifa Babatunde, argued that the government should begin reorientation of all Nigerians saying, "it appears everyone believes until you steal or mismanage public funds, you can't make it in life." She suggested that capital punishment should be introduced like most Asian countries do. "It may not stop corruption but it will automatically reduce it. For instance, the life imprisonment imposed on rape offence in Lagos State will help reduce the urge to commit the crime". Jide Arogundade, an activist also supports death sentence if the leaders are serious in stopping corruption. "Anyone who steals more than N2m should be made to face firing squad. I believe this is not too much if we consider the ripple effect of corruption on citizenry", he said.

Stories by Dayo Johnson; Samuel Oyadongha; Egufe Yafugborhi; Peter Duru; Laolu Elijah; Jimitota Onoyume; Ozioruva Aliu; Ochuko Akuopha; Steve Oko & Ibrahim Hassan-Wuyo