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## An Assessment of Operation Rainbow as a Mechanism for Peace- building in Plateau State, Nigeria

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### **Abstract:**

*The study assessed Operation Rainbow as a mechanism for Peace- building in Plateau State. Operation Rainbow was created by Plateau State Government which includes civilians to address the perceived harassment by the Federal Government Joint Security Task Force in Plateau State to coil the lingering crises that engulfed the State most especially Jos North and Jos South Local Government Areas. The result shows that resource rivalry, power politics are factors that promote conflict in Plateau state as people struggle for power; there is collaboration between the Operation Rainbow and other security agencies to tackle the crises which leads to significant Peace-building. This study concludes that the lack of sincere conflict resolution efforts in Jos resulted in the transformation of a once-localized confrontation between political elites of different ethnic groups into a protracted communal conflict with a strong religious dimension. The study recommended that there is need to address Constitutional Reforms to political structure in the country.*

### **1. Introduction**

Plateau state widely known as the home of peace and tourism is uniquely located in the north central geo-political zone of Nigeria. It was created in 1976 and has Jos as its capital. Plateau state derived its name from the highlands of Jos; it has an average height of 1200 meters above sea level. There are several rivers and streams forming captivating landscape scenery in the state. The land features show many escarpments, rugged hills and rock formation. The land area covers about 26,629.5 square kilometers. The state is inhabited by about 3,178,712 populaces according to 2006 census. Farming, trade and civil service job is the main occupation in the state. ([www.plateau.state.gov.ng](http://www.plateau.state.gov.ng)).

Jos is sharply divided society, split into indigene (Berom, Anaguta, Afezeri) and non-indigenes (Hausa-Fulani). There are however other sizeable ethnic groups which include Igbo, Yoruba, Ngas, Tiv etc. The indigenes are largely Christians while the non-indigenes are mostly Muslims. Thus, when there are any quarrels between the two parties, they usually go after each other places of worship for destructions. (Ojukwu and Onifade, 2010).

Plateau state has experience incessant violent conflict over the years and this conflict has taken a serious toll in the political, cultural and socio-economy of the state that has led to loss of lives and properties worth millions of naira.

IPCR (2013), said Plateau state started experiencing sectarian crises following the splitting of the former Jos Local Government Area into Jos North, Jos South and Jos East Local Government Areas respectively by the then General Ibrahim Babangida led military Government in 1991. This research also indicated that respondents in the field expressed the view that ordinarily, the idea of splitting the local government Area into three would have been greeted with effusive outpouring of joy and belief by the people. However, the sinister motive behind the exercise made the people, especially the indigenous people apprehensive of the logic behind such decision. Many believed that the decision to split the Local Government into three was primarily to provide political accommodation for the growing Hausa- Fulani population in Jos North.

Since 2001, violence has become tellingly more frequent and deadlier in Plateau state. More lives and properties were destroyed in 2002 at Eto-baba neighborhood in Jos-north when People's Democratic Party (PDP) ward election turned into bloody ethno-religious fracas (Umar, 2010). Infact, the first episode of mass violence in Jos since the anti-Igbo pogroms in 1966 occurred in 2001 (Danfulani & Fwatshak, 2002).

The Federal Government of Nigeria through its security joint tax force comprising of the Military, Police, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence corps and others fail to address the root causes of the crises because of some perceived agitations of collaborations between the Joint Tax Force against the indigenes. This paper seeks to look at how Operation Rainbow was created by the State government to include the indigenous people into maintaining peace- building in the State.

Operation Rainbow is a hybrid force that was established on June, 2010 by the Plateau state government under the leadership of former Governor Jonah David Jang to increase the peace-building effort to help curb that of the joint tasks force (JTF), civil society's organization (CSO's) and non-governmental organization (NGO's). It was the initiative of the Federal government of Nigerian granting Borno, Bauchi, Gombe, and Plateau states a rare permission to organize a new security force. These arrangement calls for military forces to be mixed with civilians to quell violence. With the charter, Plateau state formed Operation Rainbow. This hybrid force was established by the state government after the perceived failure of the joint task force (JTF) later remoulded as special task force (STF) to bring the violent conflict to a halt (under control). Operation Rainbow with its neighbourhood watch operatives was set to perform community policing duties in their various localities. They are expected to provide accurate and timely information on the security situation in their wards to enable proactive action by government security agencies (Operation Rainbow 2012).

Operation Rainbow is a hybrid fusion of several security forces/outfits comprising of the Nigeria Army, Nigeria Navy, Nigeria Air force, the Nigeria Police, DSS (department of state security). It also includes other security agencies like the immigration, civil defence, the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), fire service and road safety.

### *1.1. Statement of the Problem*

This study seeks to look at the assessment of operation rainbow as a hybrid force since its inception in 2010 to 2016 in relation to other security outfits in the state and how this security outfit (Operation Rainbow) has been a veritable tool to the sustainability of peace and security. Also, to explain the outfit's process that has bridged the perceived inequality by the military in the state and to checkmate its activities within the context of perceived abuses.

Security which is the bedrock of any given society for meaningful peace and development has the feeling of safety from harm and danger, the absence of threat and the act of human survival. The largely military conception of security has focus on the state a negative perception about security thereby making the government to think outside the box and introduce a traditional military concept; therefore, the need for change. In this regards the initiative to re-define the security sector of the state became a thing of paramount concern and this gave birth to Operation Rainbow.

In the last fifteen years, the lost of human lives and the destruction of properties have been immense and the cost is beyond measurement. Military involvement in internal security in Plateau state since 2001 has been characterized by misunderstanding and mistrust, often reinforcing ethno-religious fault lines. Communities have reported military indiscipline and unprofessionalism, including harassment at checkpoints and the violation of their rights as people. Also, the bridge of information between the military and the state government have become worrisome despite all logistics support that was avail by the state. The state government on the other hand decided to bridge the information gap sharing by establishing a hybrid force to curtail inaccuracy in information and help gather intelligence for proactive response to the violent conflict and reprisal attacks in the state. The former Governor of Plateau state, Da Jonah David Jang, in the wake of complaints of alleged complacency of operatives of the Special Task Force in handling the prolonged Jos conflict and other security challenges, established a hybrid state security outfit, Operation Rainbow. The state's response to violence is circumscribed by the fact that all security agencies are controlled from the federal level, there by living the state government with no intelligence and without power for early warning and early response (EWER). Therefore, since the state government does not have state powers to control the act of coercion it provided a means where intelligence can be shared, response and prevention mechanism of further violence conflict can be enhanced through the state power. Against this backdrop, the Plateau state government was left with no choice than to employ a more workable and veritable platform that will help in the attainment of peace that was lost. As a result of the quest for peace the Plateau state government established a hybrid force named "Operation Rainbow" to help curb the security challenges in the state

### *1.2. Research Question*

This research work is to probe the following.

- I. What are some of the causes of conflict in Plateau state?
- II. To investigate the relationship between operation rainbow and other security agencies in Plateau state?
- III. To what extent has this security outfit contributed significantly to peace-building in Plateau state?

### *1.3. Objectives of the Research*

The objective of this research is to examine the roles played by Operation Rainbow as a hybrid security sector agency in the perennial violent conflict in Jos north and Jos south local government Areas of Plateau state since its inception in June, 2010 to 2016. These locations remain the epicentre of hostilities, a centripetal of human right violation with some seeing greater continuation of violence than others.

- I To investigate the failure of past attempts to curb violent conflict that has lead to the hybridization of peace-building in Plateau state.
- II The incessant upheaval in the state merits a need to investigate the activism of Operation Rainbow as a paradigm for peace-building, conflict management and conflict prevention platform
- III To bring to limelight public safety, crime reduction, violence prevention and early warning signal as constitute key functions of Operation Rainbow in most communities and the state at large.
- IV To evaluate core security architecture responsibility that exclusively initiated the support of formal Security structures of the state with an initiative of hybridizing peacekeeping, to arrest and prosecute crime against humanity in Plateau state.

- V To evaluate the performance of hybridization of operation rainbow over the past 6years and how to commensurate/verify the mandate on which it was established; seeking an avenue for exposing and enlighten the masses towards attenuating its weaknesses and accentuating its strength and achievements.

In this light this study is essentially poised to examine the efficacy of Operation Rainbow as a hybrid conflict prevention and peace-building mechanism in Plateau state.

#### 1.4. Scope of the Research

This research is confined within specific time and purview in order to achieve a great deal of precision and purpose of the study. The research will cover Jos north and Jos south of Plateau state owing to the fact that Operation Rainbow's peacebuilding activities are stronger in these metropolitan areas. This research intends to cover the peacebuilding effort of Operation Rainbow from 2010 to 2016. This is hinged on the fact that the research is expected to be thorough.

## 2. Methods

### 2.1. Research Design

Data for this research work will be gathered via the use of questionnaires and interview methods. This is in line to bring to limelight the Operation Rainbow and also accentuate it strength.

### 2.2. Procedure of Data Collection

Primary data collection will involve interview and administration of questionnaires. 250 questionnaires will be given within Jos north and Jos south.

### 2.3. Method of Data Analysis

The data obtained by administrating the instrument were analysed and carried out to investigate the research questions. These consist of computation of percentage. The boundaries of each response in the 5-point Likert scales (strongly agreed SA, disagreed DA, strongly disagreed SDA, agreed A, uncertain U).

## 3. Result

The descriptive information of respondents, number of questionnaires given and number of questionnaires returned.

Population of Respondents	Number of Questionnaires Given	Number of Questionnaires Returned
Operation Rainbow staff	50	50
Members of the public	100	76
Students	20	14
Security agency	50	42
Victims of conflict	30	24
<b>Total</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>206</b>

Table 1

Responses Options	Number of Respondents	Percentage %
Strongly agreed	100	50%
Agreed	50	25%
Uncertain	20	10%
Strongly disagreed	-	-
Disagreed	30	15%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 2: These are some of the causes of conflict in Plateau state (i) resources rivalry (ii) power politics (Resource control as the cause of conflict in Plateau state)

Source Survey: 2016

Table 2 above shows that a total of 200 respondents responded to the different option. 100 of the respondent representing 50% strongly agree to the variable that resources rivalry and power politics can cause conflict in Plateau state. 50 respondent representing 25% also agreed. 20 respondent's representing 10% were uncertain and could not make a decision while 30 of the respondent representing 15% disagree with the fact that resources rivalry and power politics can cause conflict in Plateau state. Following the presentation of data and analysis interpretation it can be justify that resource rivalry; power politics are factor that can promote conflict in Plateau state as more people can struggle for any of the above.

Response Options	Number of Respondents	Percentage %
Strongly agreed	90	45%
Agreed	30	15%
Uncertain	50	25%
Strongly disagreed	20	10%
Disagreed	10	5%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 3: Do you think that the relationship of operation rainbow with other security agencies has been cordial and peaceful over time past?  
Source Survey: 2016

Table 3 above shows 45% respondents who strongly agreed, 15% agreed 25% uncertain, 10% strongly disagreed and 5% disagreed that operation rainbow with other sister agencies have cordial relationship in time past. As shown in the above statistics it was adhered to in a group discussion held on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2016 with some group of Operation Rainbow operatives that they have a cordial relationship with the other security agencies. The Nigerian security and civil defence corps also concur to the fact that operation rainbow has a cordial relationship with them.

Response Options	Number of Respondents	Percentage %
Strongly agreed	50	25%
Agreed	74	37%
Uncertain	32	16%
Strongly disagreed	10	5%
Disagreed	34	17%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 4: Has operation rainbow contributed immensely to peace-building in Plateau state?  
Source Survey: 2016

In table 4 above, the survey shows that 25% of the respondents strongly agreed that operation rainbow has contributed to the success of peace-building on the plateau. 74 respondents representing 37% also agreed, 32 respondents representing 16% are uncertain about the operations of rainbow. 10 and 34 of the respondents strongly-disagreed and disagree which represent 5% and 17% respectively that operation rainbow has not been a tool for peace-building in Plateau state. Categorically, it can be inferred that Operation Rainbow by the percentage of positive response of 124 respondents that the agency has been a vehicle of peace-building.

#### 4. Findings

The result shows that resource rivalry, power politics are factors that promote conflict in Plateau state as people struggle for power. Therefore, this research has also collaborated to the fact that the creation of Jos North and Jos South Local Government Areas in 1991, the Local Government elections of 2001 in Jos North that exacerbated the crisis was based for power struggle.

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Categorically, it can be inferred that Operation Rainbow by the percentage of positive response of 124 respondents that the agency has been a vehicle of peace-building.

#### 5. Conclusion

A decade of communal violence has reshaped the city. Today, Jos is largely characterized by ethno-religious segregation in residence, business, trade, and transportation. This study finds that the lack of sincere conflict resolution efforts in Jos resulted in the transformation of a once-localized confrontation between political elites of different ethnic groups into a protracted communal conflict with a strong religious dimension. Subsequent to violent clashes in Jos, tensions in rural areas and small towns exploded. Urban and rural cycles of violence have reinforced different conflict clusters along the overarching religious divide. Many residents have come to understand the conflict as a religious confrontation linked to regional and national political developments. The increasing brutality of the killings over the past two decades has had a traumatizing impact on the local population. This has resulted in a severe breakdown of trust and communication between religious communities. A common urban practice during riots is the blocking of major streets and the selective killing of individuals who do not recite the correct religious verses. Here a local peace-building mechanism will be of a great help (Operation Rainbow).

Operation Rainbow became necessary following abysmal performance in rendering security to the defenceless natives and other weak groups. Today Operation Rainbow performance is soaring higher and it is expected to yield and re-establish the desired peace in Plateau state if given necessary logistics and support.

Peace-building should be prioritized in Plateau state considering the responses of government to conflict and sustainable peace. The creation of Operation Rainbow was a plausible one by the then administration of Gov. Jonah David Jang and the new bureau for

Peace-building initiated by the present Governor Rt. Hon. Simon Bako Lalong are all geared towards lasting and sustainable peace. All these platforms (agencies) should be encouraged with the necessary logistics to function as expected.

## 6. Recommendation

Based on the findings of this study, recommendations are as follows.

1. Constitutional reforms: there is a need to redefine the political structure of the country and address the indigene/settlers impasse with both rights clearly in-scripted.
2. Contain culture of impunity: violence on the Plateau and other parts of the country has already become an issue of impunity. For many violent conflict with wanton destruction of life and properties have occurred, the culture of impunity will continue to rule. Therefore, a platform for checkmating governance should be created like that of the social media.
3. Nigerian state should adopt the true practice of federalism where state will have the power to establish their state security system. Making state executives truly the security heads of their states.
4. Good governance should be sacredly upheld as a religion by political leaders. This will reduce a lot of tensions in the areas of poverty, employment, corruption among others.
5. Religious leaders will have to take responsibility for invalidating the perceptions of existential threat to religious identity that have become entrenched in many people's daily lives. Top-level religious leaders have preached peace and tolerance, but the message does not trickle down fully. While grassroots initiatives echo their tenor, mid-level religious leaders feel under pressure to protect their communities. People tend to be suspicious of inter-religious dialogue, making it difficult to rebuild trust among communities. Many within the churches and mosques call for a more militant response from their community. The city managed to stay calm during the 2011 elections, but political elites in Jos and Abuja will need to tackle the Jos crisis. A heavy military presence is no durable solution.
6. Early warning mechanism like Operation Rainbow organization should be encouraged with the necessary logistics to be able to nip the escalation of perceived conflict situation. A core aspect of a functioning early warning system is timely and adequate response by security forces. Such a response was entirely lacking in 2001 and 2008. The repeated failure of early warning and peace-building activities further damaged communication networks. Local peace-building have pointed out community policing increases the chances of peace.
7. Community initiative should be encourage being a prototype in the peace-building activities in Jos Plateau and environs. Despite pressure of conflict in Plateau state and many rural communities, Dadin kowa community managed to remain peaceful. The community of Dadin Kowa located in Jos South LGA of the state has remained peaceful to date. Several mixed communities surround the settlement; some have seen sporadic killings (such as Rayfield) and violent clashes (such as Anglo Jos). The majority of Dadin Kowa's population is Christian, although there is a significant Muslim minority. The population is mixed in terms of economic and social status, with large houses on the outskirts and crammed streets of poor settlements in its centre. The government and civil societies should help model that in other communities within the state.
8. The issue of 'indigene-settler' should be dealt with at the state assembly. A solution to the conflict over indigene rights and political representation will need to take a state dimension. Plateau state cannot wait until the Nigerian Federation agrees on an amendment to the current constitution to prioritize citizenship over indigene rights.

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