

Hypothesizing the Playwright's Esperance and Cynicism on Nigerian Civil Society in Ahmed Yerima's *Hendu*

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Abstract

Insurgency is a major crisis which constitutes huge threat to security in Nigeria in the contemporary time. Different solution suggestions have been offered, and such suggestions include hiring mercenaries to quash the terrorist menace. In this paper, the authors, examine the dramatist's presentation of this insecurity situations in the play, *Hendu* by Ahmed Yerima. The paper is qualitative in mode of analysis and guided by John Rawls' Theory of Justice as well as James Fowler's Faith Development Theory. In *Hendu*, Yerima looks at the government culpability in the uprising and repudiates the ineptitude of politicians who recruit political thugs to cause electoral violence. Yerima also bemoans the alleged past government's support for the herdsmen based on tribal tie as such has sparked *Fulanization Agenda* allegation and secessionist agitation among other ethnic groups such as the Yoruba and the Igbo in the south of Nigeria. Yerima laments the crimes against women and children by the armed insurgents in the play, and opines that these insecurity threats are politicians' creations and such can only be stopped by the elite political class. However, the paper holds that stopping the uprising will be a herculean task for government as the menace has become endemic, commercialized, and professionalized. In addition to this, the herculean nature of the task is also indicated by the reported international connection to the insurgencies. The implied necessity corresponding to the international connection of the menace is that the Nigerian government may necessarily need to seek cooperation with international community on intelligence gathering, surveillance, and war technologies.

Key words: Nigerian civil society, Herdsmen, Terrorist insurgency, Yerima's dramaturgy, *Hendu*

Introduction

There have been allegations of deadly attacks linked to herdsmen as insurgents in Nigeria, especially as originating in the Northeastern part of the country. Incidents of violent attacks by herders occur in high

frequency in Nigeria. The activities of the herdsmen have worsened the security situations and stressed Nigerian government's security architecture. This position is corroborated in the declaration that the herdsmen-farmer conflicts have indicated huge potential to exacerbate the insecurity situation in both rural and urban centers in the Nigeria. Deadly violence between herders and farmers is indeed one of Nigeria's most recurrent security hurdles and it has left thousands of innocent people dead in just past few years. This is part of the general security problems in Nigeria (Peterside, 2021). The situation is so deplorable that Nigerian government in successive years has had to increase budget to security. This could be seen in the N4.6 billion allocation to security by the then Jonathan administration in 2014 increasing to 16,34 billion allocated to security by the Buhari administration in 2022. (Abdul, 2021) expatiates further that the Buhari administration has increased the yearly budgetary allocation to security and defense from N4.6 trillion, representing the last budgetary allocation to security by the Goodluck Jonathan government, to N16.34 trillion as proposed in the 2022 budget. This indicates that the budget to security and defense has gone up by almost N12 trillion and this is in a spate of seven-year budgetary cycle. The implication of this is that there is more money to buy guns, but less money for running schools, hospitals, as well as agriculture. In effect, the N2.41 trillion which was allotted to security and defense in the 2022 budget was much more than the total budgetary allocations to both education and health.

Such a consistent budget increase has been seen as unhealthy for the Nigerian economy as the country over-relies on debt financing to sustain the economy (Olufemi, 2020). The security threat which herders are perpetrating in Nigeria is motivated by the unchecked vehemence and the human right violation activities of Boko Haram whose stock in trade include bombing, abduction of school girls for ransom among other unpleasant attack strategies. The violence being perpetrated by Fulani herdsmen as may be motivated by Boko Haram insurgency which had been on before the herders' violence erupted, is one of the major national issues in contemporary Nigeria. It is of concern to both the Nigerian government and the citizenry. The international community has expressed concerns especially because of the humanitarian and human rights abuse consequences of the conflict across Nigeria especially in the Northeastern part of the country.

Such concerns have motivated Ahmed Yerima to address the conflict situation in his contemporary play, *Henduas* a means of social awareness and public education. In this contemporary Nigerian play, the

Fulani herdsmen fatal attacks on farmers known in local parlance as banditry and the terrorist dimension in the form of bombing of infrastructure and abduction of innocent people for ransom are subject-matters in the play. This social menace in the form of banditry and terrorist warfare has been alien to Nigeria. Of more significant concern to Ahmed Yerima, whose dramatic themes examine the stupefying social developments that dominate the Nigerian socio-political and socio-economic landscape (Onyerionwu, 2017), is the disorientating and the disintegrating consequences of the herders' insurgency in Nigeria as the frightening aftermaths of terrorist atrocities in Nigeria. The situations in Nigeria as portrayed in this play are examined in this study with a view to ascertaining the playwright's perspectives on the knotty and alarming security conditions in the Nigerian society.

Methodology

The author has employed the qualitative research method in advancing the ideas in the paper, and this is with a view to making the position maintained in the paper conclusive. The qualitative research method is aimed at upholding the view-justification approach as a way of affirming the logic of the position advanced in the study. This methodological approach is a contradiction of data-analysis strategy. The non-metrical means of advancing views is used in conducting the research. This has been considered appropriate because of the situation that the research has been occasioned by rationalist process and evaluation. In addition to the data-and-figure-exclusion approach to this research, the writer has also chosen the dramatic literary genre. This is because of the aesthetic and functionalist value of African dramaturgy. These properties and characteristics make African plays to be of peculiar interest to many Nigerians from different walks of life. The choice of the dramatic literature has been motivated by the successes that writers such as Wole Soyinka, John Pepper Clark Bekederemo, Ahmed Yerima, Femi Osofisan et cetera have achieved through plays by addressing critical national issues such as herdsmen's insurgency. This burning issue of insecurity is addressed by Yerima in the play, *Hendu*.

Theoretical Framework

The paper is guided by a number of theoretical strategies and approaches. The different approaches have been adopted in order to achieve the central ideas of the paper efficiently. These theoretical strategies include John Rawls' Theory of Justice. The core tenet of Theory of Peace is that society essentially needs to propose and advance

the ultimate good for a substantial number of people. This is a position which aligns with the viewpoint that the rule of tyranny of majority of the populace over the minority of the citizenry needs be repudiated. In addition to this, the ideals of the feminist ideology are employed in looking at despicable fate of women in conflict situations. Also, James Fowler's Faith Development Theory is adopted in the context of the self faith proselytization situation in the discussion.

Choice of *Hendu* for the Research

The play, *Hendu* has been considered appropriate for the research because of a number of reasons. The first is that the play addresses the sources of insecurity in Nigeria at the moment. Insecurity is the most worrisome and threatening national issue in Nigeria today. Yet there are no panaceas to the malady. Suggestions are being offered by public management pundits locally and these include literary writers, and internationally. Also, since the insurgencies are underway, literary texts on them are limited. Other possible existing texts and those that may be written on herdsmen as perpetrators of social threat will be used in further research.

An Appraisal of the Roles of Drama in Nigerian Society

Dramatic compositions, especially in Nigeria, perform critical social functions. Through their works, Nigerian playwrights have been able to address critical social and political imbalances. Though other forms of literary writings such as pamphlets, poems, novels, short stories, and musical compositions have also been explored to address social inconsistencies, but African plays could be seen as being more efficient in this regard. Plays have been generally adjudged to be a positivemedium employed to mirror the society, and this has brought about the popular assumption that plays are mimeticrepresentations of the society of their compositions. This profound characteristic of drama has been employed byplaywrights across worldviews in making constructive views on the societal happenings in the various places of composition, and this is with a view to effecting a positivechange (Tengy, 2016). Such ultimate goal of bringing about a positive change could be in form of creating awareness in the people in order to institute a new orientation and disposition in them.

Dramatic works of notable Nigerian playwrights advance this goal. Wole Soyinka's *The Trials of Brother Jero* examines religious hypocrisy in Nigeria and Soyinka is successful in this play because he is able to convince the audience whose view of religious charlatanism has

been corrected (Mireku-Gyimah, 2013; Davoodifar and Moussa, 2015). In the same vein, Ahmed Yerima is able to create awareness in the people on the need for humane disposition to women in *Jakadiya* (Eruaga, 2018), while Femi Osofisan addresses the problem of financial corruption in the political quarters in the play *Midnight Hotel* manifesting the call on literature to serve humanity in order to redress the social-political ills in post-colonial Nigeria (Shittu, 2019; Aihevba and Odia, 2018). And the essential concern of John Pepper Clark's Bekederemos's plays are significantly aimed at the reinforcement of the Ijaw cultural settings with particular emphasis on the enunciation of the roles of religious beliefs in navigating the cultural life of the same Ijaw society (Nwoke, 2017). These Nigerian plays have addressed these fundamental social and political situations in the country and have, as a result, drawn the attention of all concerned to the inconsistencies as a setback to the progress of the country.

Insurgency in Nigeria

The emergence of terrorism in Nigeria could be attributed to the grievance of an Islamic group in the Northeast Nigerian, Boko haram, about government's insensitivity to the plight of the citizens. The killing of the leader of the religious sect in police custody in 2009 worsened the agitation of the group. This affirms Henne and Kloczek, (2019) view that a government is prone to be repressive of religious groups as a result of its experiences and that religious groups can pose a threat in a society. Terrorism in Nigeria was as a result of government's neglect of civil grievances. This explains how Boko Haram, a group that the Nigerian government has declared a terrorist organization, emerged in the Northern part of Nigeria. Olojo (2013) opines that the terrorist insurgency in Nigeria, especially in the Northern part of Nigeria which has been instigated by the sectarian group, Boko Haram, was predicated on such factors as poverty, age-long economic disparities among the different peoples and population groups and other categories in Nigeria as well as structural and communal violence which underlie the crisis. The insurgent fighters manifest their grievances in indiscriminate bombing of people, all categories of people, including the vulnerable groups who are usually at risk of brutality during armed conflicts. These are women, children as well as the handicapped.

The terrorist group also attacks government facilities. Since its advent in Nigeria in 2009, terrorism has festered. For example, Boko Haram has occupied territories in the Northern part of the country. It has established international link. It has also multiplied with the infiltration

of Islamic States West African Province (ISWAP). In Nigeria in the contemporary time, terrorist attacks are experienced and such attacks are no longer foreign as they once were. However, terrorist incidents in Nigeria have affected both the government and individuals. On March 28, 2022, there was a fatal attack on a passenger train along the Abuja-Kaduna rail route in Nigeria. British Broadcasting Corporation reported that about 168 passengers were missing as a result of the attack according to the Nigeria Railway Corporation. The reports read that about 168 passengers were still unaccounted for in Nigeria after a fatal attack on a train a week earlier as gunmen bombed a section of rail track between Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory, and Kaduna in the northern part of Nigeria. During the unfortunate incident about eight passengers lost their lives. A survivor of the attack told the BBC how a step to change carriage could have saved him, and the many lives of his family members. (Enwokor, 2022)

As a result of the incessant attacks in the form of gun shootings and bombings of government's infrastructure, government has had to expend scarce resources on fighting insurgency, and there is the disorientation of citizens and disintegration of family. Since 2009, when Boko Haram terrorist activities sprouted, Nigerian government has been budgeting huge financial resources to fighting terrorists' anti-State activities in the Northeastern part of Nigeria. The situation is even worse these days with the advent of Fulani herders' insurgency. These funds could have been expended on providing social amenities, rather than buying ammunitions.

Socio-political Reading of *Hendu*

In the play *Hendu*, Yerima looks into the herdsmen's crisis as such crisis happens currently in Nigeria. The play, therefore, is a reconstruction of the uprising. Cattle-rearing is generally believed to be the prerogative of the Fulani people in the north. Though people from other parts of Nigeria such as the Igbos and the Yoruba both in the southern part of the country do rear cows, however, the number of people who engage in this from the southern Nigeria is minimal and their productivity is limited. The Fulanis are seen as the custodians of cattle rearing in Nigeria. There has however been a lot of hews and cries about the violent activities of the herdsmen in the country for some time. The herders have been accused of notorious activities in the color and model of terrorism. Such criminal activities include kidnapping for ransom, vendetta killings, rape, land grabbing, and in the current tactics, bombing of government facilities such as train lines and coaches. All of these have brought about

panic among the people and instability in the polity. This is the concern of Ahmed Yerima in the play *Hendu* with a view to proffering a lasting solution to the Nigerian social conflict.

One of the ways through which Yerima is proffering a solution to these anti-social phenomena is by tracing the political ramification of the violent phenomena. This is noted in the postulation that certain individuals do instigate and fuel the uprising in Nigeria and that the reasons for these individuals to sponsor the insurgencies haunt the playwright (Yerima, 2019). However, the worries of the playwright could be assuaged in the fact that vendetta to discredit the government for popularity among the populace and sleaze from gun-running or from elaborate budgetary allocation to defense in fighting insecurity are paramount to the instigators. This has introduced political and economic dimensions to the series of uprisings especially the herdsmen uprisings in Nigeria today. Yerima expresses this position more unmistakably in the conversation between his two characters Garga and Gambo:

Garga: I need more powers. The demand of the new business has
Gone beyond cattle rustling

Gambo: You have not told me the name of the politician who needs our service to upset the polling booth, the kidnapping plans and robbery plans (*Hendu*, 14)

The idea of the new business is the crimes which politicians have commissioned/employed the cattle herders to commit for the purpose of achieving personal political aggrandizement of the politicians. The system by which the Fulani herdsmen carry out their business of cattle rearing has made them prone to being employed for nefarious activities such as the disruption of voting process during election time. This is because the Fulani herdsmen in Nigeria are nomadic cattle herders. They move from place to place in search of pasture for their cattle. As a result of this demand, the herders live in the forest with their cattle. This situation makes them unknown to the majority of the people. They barely have residential addresses. The herders were known to be peaceful, innocent, and gregarious all along prior to 2015 at the inception of the Buhari administration when the herdsmen were accused of perpetrating violence against innocent citizens. The violence is traceable to the criminal deals which politicians have with the herders and the first indicator of the politicians' involvement with the herders was the substitution of herding staff which they characteristically placed across their necks while the cattle graze, with A.K 47. Many Nigerians

raised alarm wondering how unsophisticated Fulani men with innocuous attributes would be able to access such a sophisticated weapon. This is despite the high cost of the firearm. Government officials have risen in defense of the herders' case. Since 2015, the Fulani herdsmen have been alleged to be responsible for series of kidnappings on high ways in Nigeria. Many innocent citizens have been victims. Among them was the daughter of elder statesman, Pa Reuben Fasanranti, MrsFunkeOlakunrin, who was killed on July 12, 2019, by gunmen suspected to be Fulani herders.

The herders have been brazen in their anti-social acts perpetrating violence in different forms. From cattle rustling to kidnapping for ransom to banditry, their transformation at any point in time is to achieve a given goal bordering on politics and financial gratification. For example, the banditry dimension whose essence is to vandalize and kill could be adjudged to be politically motivated, executed for discrediting the government of the day. This is through vendetta and destruction. Illustratively, Kaduna airport was attacked on March 26, 2022, and bandits have claimed responsibility. The despicable situation points to the fact that the government whose officials such as Attorney General of the Federation, is having a taste of the consequent bitter pills of the herdsmen's brazen violence in the country.

Implications of the Alleged Government's Support in the play

The current Nigeria president, President Mohammadu Buhari, is a Fulani man and so is the Attorney General of Nigeria, Abubakar Malami. And through the silence of Mr. President on the allegations against the herdsmen as well as the distorted rationalism of the activities of the Fulani herders across Nigeria, many Nigerians are of the view that the government of the day is supporting the herders. Many prominent Nigerians have spoken out on this state of affairs. For example, former President Olusegun Obasanjo calls the situation *Fulanization* Agenda stating that the herdsmen/farmers crises and violent activities had started with the government handling the situation with cuddling glove rather than with of hammer. It has since festered and spread nationwide. At the moment, the crises have taken the shape of banditry, armed robbery, rape, kidnapping, as well as mindless killings nationwide. The terrifying situation is that the criminal acts are being perceived by the rest parts of the country as a 'Fulani' menace being unleashed by Fulani elite class and this criminality is being perpetrated in the nooks and crannies of the country (Obasanjo, 2019).

In the same vein, Nobel Laureate, Wole Soyinka, has lamented that he has not yet heard the current government articulate a specific firm policy on non-tolerance for the constant and serial massacres that have now become Nigeria's identification seal Ezeamalu, 2016. The perceived ethnic support of the herders by the government as alleged has made the cattle herders insist on open grazing as the normal system of breeding their cattle as against ranching system being proposed by the Southern states' governments. The central government in projection of indigenous and tribal advantage recommended the *ruga* system and the rejuvenation of the grazing routes suspended many years earlier. These Federal Government initiatives were opposed by the non-Fulani's especially in Southern Nigeria comprising mainly the Yoruba, the Igbo, and the Middle Belterns. The rejection was due to the fact that both initiatives still allow the Fulani herders to be in the forest where certain atrocities were alleged by the people to be committed by the herders.

One of such atrocities as alleged is the destruction of farm plants and crops. The herders often feed their cattle with such crops and this is to the detriment of the farmers. The aftermath of this has always been fatal. Apart from the cases of kidnapping and conflicts with the farmers the herders are also alleged to be involved in raping of women in rural communities around the forest which they occupied. The herders have become brazen and daring as a result of government's support and this has had fatal consequences. Such unfortunate brutalities are recorded by Yerima in *Hendu* as conveyed in the excerpt:

Gambo: Then tell him that I live for Maseth, a village under Riyom local government was attacked by herdsmen yesterday evening. The herdsmen attacked the village, about sixty-three people were killed. (*Hendu*, 27) (sic)

An attack in which sixty-three people were killed, under whatever circumstance, can only be described as barbaric. The attending harrowing impact on these fatal attacks on individuals are pathetic as could be deduced further in this excerpt from *Hendu*, thus:

Ruk: (*Lets out a big laugh*) The Fulani are snakes. Gwong! They are like dangerous venom of the deadly snake. See, I lost everything to armed bandits of wandering killers in Mahanga in Riyom. Those whom are once called docile fools... for whatever reason best known to them shot my husband who did not die immediately alive. Who did he offend? I

say who did I and my innocent children offend? For what reason do I become a widow in broad daylight? (*Hendu*, 28)

This lamentation is an expression of the psychological pains that befall the victims of the attacks that bandits perpetrate in this play. Such attacks and lamentation are symbolic of the attacks and lamentation of the bandits' terrorist attacks in Nigeria. These are especially as they happen in such states as Yobe, Taraba, Adamawa, Zamfara, Kaduna and the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. These are places with higher incidence of the bandits' attacks. They carry out such attacks in other parts of the country as the playwright hints as follows:

Radio: Here is the news highlight at four from Radio Nigeria. Report has just reached us of an attack on Nimbo in Enugu State by Fulani herdsmen. (*Garga switches off the radio*) (*Hendu*, 51)

Enugu City is in South East Nigeria populated by the indigenous Igbo people. The usual cause of the herdsmen's attack is the need to punish the farmers for complaining when their crops have been eaten by cattle. Yerima makes further revelation in the play as in this excerpt:

Gambo: The Igbo farmers wanted to protect their lands and the Fulani men wanted the land for their cattle to graze. The devastating attack on the innocent lives by the Fulani ensured the sad tale of the country which needs both the farmers and the herdsmen to grow. (*Hendu*, 55)

The conflict has led to many farmers forsaking their farms for fear of being killed on their farms. The consequence of this ugly situation is that there is a food crisis in Nigeria these days. Food items are costly, in fact outside of the reach of the common people. Though the government attributes the high cost of food to the embargo on importation of food items into the country as a protectionist strategy, the real situation is that the herdsmen/farmers imbroglio has led to low food productions, hence, widespread hunger. This is what the playwright intends in "Wabiti: Grow? How can they grow when droplets of fresh hot blood are littered everywhere?" The blood being spilled is the blood of the innocent and unarmed people especially the wives, children and neighbors of the farmers and the farmers themselves. Progress cannot be made in such a country where there is bloodletting emanating from crisis. This is because the energy of the factions in conflict in terms of financial resources, time and reasoning will be dissipated on executing the

conflict to attain victory. Such resources would have been directed towards economic productivity in order to make the nation grow.

The Context of Fundamental Human Right Violation

Ahmed Yerima is also obviously concerned with the violation of fundamental human right in the course of the herdsmen's violence against the farmers and the community where the farmers reside. The playwright reveals that children and women are killed in the course of the attacks. As Yerima discloses:

Wabiti:Nimbo? I am really afraid now. This country fans embers of her own hell. Young deaths everywhere... with no thought for innocent women and their poor children. Like the killing in Kuru Karama where my daughter and others were buried in a well and also DogoNahawa. Apparently now I know that in this adopted kingdom of mine, there is no freedom. I must leave. It is like ripe festering boil. (*Hendu*, 55)

Of peculiar concern to the playwright in the excerpt above is the fate of children and women who are not spared in the execution of violence between herders and the farmers after all these categories of the population are termed the vulnerable groups. This is a tag that evokes sympathy. Yet they are killed in the violence. The playwright signifies the ruthlessness of the killers in the excerpt:

Ngariwa: Mother... the worst has happened,
Wabiti: What, Son?
Ngariwa: We don't know yet. But we hear that the Fulani
herdsmen attacked Kura Larama yesterday night.
They killed almost all of Biron people. (*Hendu*, 45)

Some words are of peculiar significance in the playwright's portrayal of the severity of the attack. These are *worst* which indicates absolute gruesomeness, *a lot of* which means that the killing was on a large scale, yet when the killing of human beings is on a large scale, bizarre savagery is indicated. The third word is *people*, which is gender-blind. It is also blind to age and health conditions. That is, men, women, children as well as physically-challenged individuals were victims of the fatal attack. The idea of total fatality is reiterated on page 55 of *Henduas* follows:

Wabiti: Nimbo. What happened there?
Gambo: Fulani herdsmen attacked the place, and killed

almost everybody.

This dimension of the attack has taken is a violation of global guidelines for the protection of fundamental human rights. For example, the United Nations recommends that, during war situations, women and children who are vulnerable during any armed conflicts shall be protected as it is criminal to subject them to inhumanity by belligerents. This is contained in “Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict Proclaimed by General Assembly resolution 3318 (XXIX) of 14 December 1974”. The Proclamation stipulates that all the forms of repressive and cruel and inhuman handlings of women together with children and such inhumanity includes incarceration, torture, gun shooting, indiscriminate arrests, destruction of shelters including forcible eviction as may be perpetrated by armed belligerents in the course of military missions or in conquered territories shall generally be considered criminal acts. The herdsman's conflict has taken a dimension with attending implications which inflict agony on humanity. The agony is to the extent and scale of humanitarian crisis.

However, the playwright is of the view that it is only the government that can proffer solutions of the social maladies as stated earlier, the political elite were the sponsors of the herders for the selfish political gains of the politicians. Yerima takes this position is the declaration that:

Gambo: I do not understand you anymore.

Wabiti: Nor I you. Haa, my children were right after all. Tell your people in power when you see them that they must try and settle the matter of the herdsman and farmers, or many more people will die. I have been through this, and it is not a matter of cattle ranch or route to graze. I see together and controlled by invisible bounds. (*Hendu*, 56)

The current manifestations of the herdsman's insurgency appear to defy certain solutions from the political class whom the playwright accuses of creating the worrisome crisis. A number of factors are responsible for this. The first is that the herders have taken their activities to another level. They have become bandits with a new mission and renewed vigor. As it appears, there tends to be a breach of trust and terms and conditions between them and their political sponsors. This could be gleaned from the situation that in recent time, government strategic infrastructures such as rail lines, airports, police stations as well as

military barracks and personnel have been bombed and the bandits have claimed responsibility. In addition to this, the herdsmen seem to have international connections and sponsors. What indicates this is the addition of bombing to their weaponry. This is particularly so because their operational strategy of bombing government installations is similar to the strategies employed by Islamic States, Al Qaeda and Taliban in Afghanistan. This has made the loyalty of the herdsmen/bandits to the initial political sponsor to be broken.

Such incapacity of the government (the political class) to put an end to the insurgency of the bandits is perceived in the recommendation of the governor of Kaduna State, Nasir el Rufai, Governor Babagana Zulum of Borno State, and the House of Representatives that mercenaries should be hired to fight and eliminate the bandits. Though this recommendation has been declined by the Federal Government of Nigeria (immediate and current), describing the recommendation as a shame (Akpan, 2021) and the report of such as an excessive joke (Ijedogor, 2015), mercenaries have been engaged and have been noted to have recorded successes in history, especially in places like Iraq, Yemen, Mozambique, Syria, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Venezuela, as well as Ukraine (McFate, 2020). However, McFate also raises the alarm that the deployment of mercenaries in conflict situations is on the rise with no attention being paid to such as commercialization of war. This might have accounted for the decline of the mercenary recommendation by the Federal Government of Nigeria in fighting the bandits and Boko Haram insurgents, as an extension, as Boko Haram is still wreaking havoc in Nigeria.

Apart from the hiring of mercenaries as a result of the inability of the Nigerian military to defeat the bandits due to government's compromise and inactions, lack of adequate and modern military equipment is another setback for the Nigerian military. In spite of huge budgetary allocation to defense, the Nigerian military is ill-equipped as the huge allocation has always been lost to corruption which includes graft in the procurement of arms and ammunition (Oriola, 2022). An illustrative case was the reported case of the 2.1 billion USD meant for purchasing military hard wares to fight the Boko Haram insurgency under Dasuki Sambo as National Security Adviser, but the funds were alleged to have been stolen. This led to arrests of perceived culprits. As www.bbc.com (December 1, 2015) reported that the former Nigerian national security adviser, Sambo Dasuki, was arrested for the allegation of stealing \$2bn (£1.3bn) according to his representatives. Mr Dasuki was accused of awarding fake contracts in purchasing 12 helicopters, 4

fighter jets as well as ammunition. The allegation was denied. These pieces of equipment were meant for effective against Boko Haram Islamist insurgents. MrDasuki was arrested by security agents, early morning according to a PR firm who was standing for MrDasuki.

This indictment of the political class in the security in Nigeria crisis is worsened by the culpability of Nigerian security apparatuses in the Nigerian security woes. This could also be seen in the indictment of the Deputy Inspector of Police, Abba Kyari by both the US government and Nigeria's the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) in links with Internet funds fraud and drug trafficking, respectively. Omonobi (2022) reports that Kyari has been declared wanted to stand trial in the US for conspiring to commit a wire fraud including money laundering as well as identity theft. He is indicted in a case Number 2:21-cr-00203 (also referred to as 2:21-MJ-00760 and 2:21-CR-00203-RGK), which was filed on April 29, 2021, in the U S District Court for the Central District of California. The accused high-ranking police officer was accused of colluding with a UAE-based Nigerian, Ramon Abbas, also known as *Hushpuppi* in committing the crime. The state could be described as despicable when a law enforcement agent especially in the top echelon of the force is enmeshed in a criminal situation like this. This is the lamentation of the dramatist in the play which casts doubts on the ability of the political class or the government to end the herders' insurgency including the Boko Haram terrorist operations in Northeast Nigeria.

The Secessionist Consequences of the Insurgency

It could be deduced that Yerima's central motivation for writing at this time in addition to the lamentation of the killings and violation of fundamental human rights is to avert the breakaway of the different nationalities that constitute Nigeria. At the moment, the herders' violence in the South (especially among the Yoruba and the Igbos) has resulted in such consciousness. It should be reiterated that the Fulani herdsman crisis in Nigeria started in the Northern part of Nigeria and has been exacerbated by the sponsorship the herders have received from the political elite. The social menace has spread to the Southern part of Nigeria where they rape, kidnap, and kill with impunity and abandon (Dami, 2021). The silence of the Federal government of Nigeria has made people hold the view that the government is complicit in the herders' violence in the South. This has consequently resulted in more vehement agitation for secession of the southern part of Nigeria from the country. The Southern Nigeria comprises the Southwest, the South-East

and the South-South. Of major concern in this agitation for breakaway nations are two major figures who are Nnamdi Kanu and Sunday Adeyemo Igboho. These figures are agitating for the Biafra Republic and Yoruba Nation, respectively. However, Nnamdi Kanu is currently in prison custody and standing trial for felony. Sunday Igboho's house was attacked by the officers of the Department of State Services (DSS) in the middle of the night in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. Two of his allies were killed. He was later arrested in the neighboring Benin Republic when he was fleeing Nigeria. The arrest was through diplomatic liaison or compromise. He was detained, arraigned, but acquitted. To Yerima, this situation of secessionist agitation would be avoided if the herders' insurgency is addressed promptly.

Conclusion

In this play, *Hendu*, Ahmed Yerima explores the nefarious anti-social activities of Fulani Herdsmen in Nigeria. The play is Yerima's portrayal of the worrisome insecurity situations in the country. Herdsmen who have travelled from the north of Nigeria to different parts of the country perpetrate criminal activities such as kidnapping for ransom, reprisal massacres, gang rape, land grabbing as well as land territory occupation. As bandits, they launch attacks on the people, nationals as well as foreigners. This is done also through bombing of infrastructure strategically as illustrated in the March 28, 2022 bombing of a passenger train belonging to the Federal Government of Nigeria. The playwright also highlights the consequences of the activities of the herders. Such consequences include allegation *Fulanization* agenda, secessionist agitation, violation of human rights and national distrust. Others are palpable tension, war mongering, low economic productivity, and massive exit from the country by the citizens and multinationals. He proffers solutions to the conflicts and tensions masterminded by the Fulani herdsmen. This is that only the government in Nigeria can end the violent activities of the herders since it is the creation of the government. There are various ways though which Yerima establishes the culpability of government in the Fulani herders' violence and terrorist crises in Nigeria. This is by the way of instituting good government in the country.

As a result, government/politicians should desist from recruiting and arming the youth in perpetrating violence against political opposition. Government needs to put an end to ethnic nepotism to the detriment of other ethnic groups. Government should also ensure a buoyant economy in order to engage the youth. This is capable of

reducing if not totally extirpate violence and terrorism through youth interest in illicit means such as kidnapping for ransom which the youth engage in these days. However, it is not so certain that terrorism can be extirpated when some factors are considered. In the first instance, the herdsmen (bandits) have commercialized their violence on the nation by collecting ransoms which are usually in millions. They have made a career out of the crises, therefore. In addition to this, the herdsmen have been infiltrated by external ideological forces such as IS. The crises involving the herdsmen may persist as long as the external forces operate. It is also worth noting that the circumstances that instigated the terrorist crises still persist in Nigeria. Such circumstances include recruitment of vibrant youth by politicians to carry out violence against opposition political views. Also, there is abject poverty and deprivation as a result of unemployment and low productivity in Nigeria. This deplorable social situation, however, is in the midst of mind-blowing opulence being flaunted by the political class in the country, and the consequence of this is anger and uprising. All these circumstances have to be surmounted before the herdsmen's insurgency can be eliminated.

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