



Situation Reports From The Northeast and North Central

The North Eastern and North Central regions of Nigeria has, over the years, been disturbed by violence and insecurity, particularly because of the Boko Haram insurgency. However, more recently, there has been an upsurge in violence in the regions, owing to clashes between herdsmen and farmers.

This worrying trend has led to the loss of many lives, and it brings to fore the question of what value we place on every Nigerian life above all else. Government has a duty to secure lives and property, and a situation where wanton killings become the norm should not be allowed to fester.

To get the true picture of things in the region, we spoke to a few of our members from Zamfara, Taraba, and Benue States.



Dr. Umar Muhammad - National Auditor & Secretary, Board of Trustees

The situation in Zamfara State is really tense. These bandits, or castle rustlers, usually attack soft targets, such as the villages, which don't have much security.

The main reason these bandits decided to take

up arms was that the cattle routes of the Fulani nomads were allegedly hijacked by traditional rulers and politicians and turned into farmlands and roads. Another reason is that when the killings started in the rural communities, with their cattle being killed and houses burned, the villagers decided to form vigilante groups, which are engaged in extrajudicial killings of people suspected to be cattle rustlers.

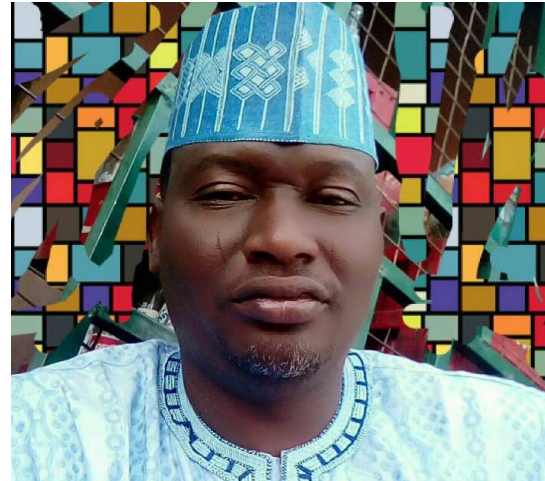
To ensure peace, the government should encourage cattle ranching in the state since the crisis started with clashes between farmers and cattle rearers. Also, security should be beefed up in the rural areas and job opportunities provided for the youth that live in such communities. The government should also disarm those who illegally possess firearms. We strongly believe no amnesty should be granted to these bandits because they are not fighting a just cause; they are just criminals.



Mr. Hamza Aminu - Zamfara State Chair

The reasons for the clashes in Zamfara State include the following: unemployment among the youth, illiteracy, misunderstanding between cattle rearers and farmers, and poverty.

The government should provide adequate security, and if possible an army base in some areas, especially in villages, which are very far from the major towns.



Mr. Nasiru Mustapha Mafindi - Taraba State Chair

There is crisis between farmers and cattle herders, between Boko Haram militias and mercenaries and between Fulani herdsmen and armed robbers.

I think it has a political face to it because most of the Fulani population in the state are in the APC and most of the other tribes are in the PDP. The Fulanis want to get power by all means necessary because they believe they are in the majority in Taraba State. Also, here in Taraba, the government has already taken sides. The only thing that would bring lasting peace would be to repeal the anti-grazing law, and give equal political appointments to all tribes in Taraba State, irrespective of religion.



Titus Difo - Taraba Deputy State Secretary

In the rural areas, many who are subsistence

farmers are being displaced, which will affect their normal existence, especially now that it is the rainy season.

So, now you can imagine a farmer who has no source of income and he is being destabilised. He can't feel at home now, even if he is asked to go back to his place, he would not be free.

There must be a synergy between the federal and state governments. Also, the security agencies have to be impartial in discharging their responsibilities.

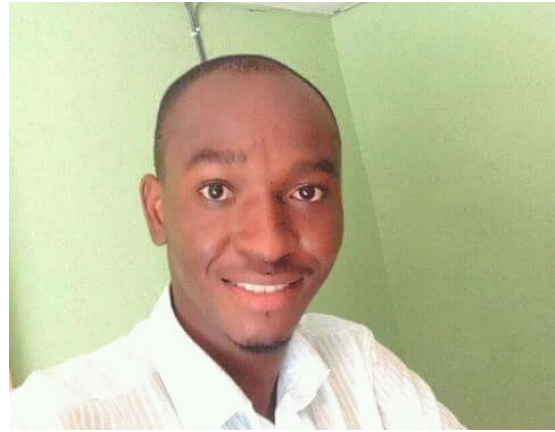


Mr. Akeer Stanley - Benue State Chair

The people of Benue basically depend on farming because it's been about a year since the State Government paid salaries to its workers. So, the only thing that even civil servants are living off is farming. But now, the cattle are grazing on this land that is not enough for a rapidly increasing populace.

Some of the market women that farm in Markurdi at the riverbanks were beaten up by herdsmen and not even allowed to farm, which is worsening the food security and poverty in the state.

The solution to this crisis is the proper implementation of the anti-grazing law that was recently passed, plus the active backing of the Federal Government. The security agencies also need to do more to protect lives and properties by arresting those responsible for the violence and not shielding the perpetrators.



Mr. Ongboja Lawrence - Benue State Secretary

The major cause of this crisis is territorial dominance by the herdsmen who want free rein on land for their cattle to graze on. Meanwhile the people of Benue, who are mostly peasant farmers, want their crops to grow on this same land.

This crisis has put fear into the lives of the people of Benue State, especially those who have been displaced from their homes and others who worry that their homes and communities will be invaded.

To solve this issue, the government should shut the borders to these foreign invaders. The security agencies should be empowered to do more to protect the lives and property of the citizens and discharge their responsibilities without taking sides.



Arise O Nigerian Youth

by Olasumbo Ajibade

"The trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely the failure of leadership. There is nothing basically wrong with the Nigerian character. There is nothing wrong with the Nigerian land or climate or water or air or anything else."

- Chinua Achebe

57 years after independence, and despite its abundance of human and material resources, Nigeria is still struggling with setting the country on the right path of political, economic, environmental, social, technological, educational and cultural greatness. The poor leadership of Nigeria, since 1960, has had a crippling effect on the country's socio-political development. Our civil service reeks of corruption and the unemployment rate is as high as ever.

The irony of these tragedies is that the problems bedevilling the nation were created by the same crop and calibre of leaders who continue to dominate political affairs. To rebuild Nigeria, we the youths need to be a major part of the solution.

Nigeria has a huge youth demography, which if properly managed and harnessed, will steer the country on a path of development. The problem, unfortunately, seems to be that many Nigerian youths are waiting for power to be handed over to them on a platter of gold without fighting or acquiring basic leadership skills that'll prepare

them for greater service to their land. We cannot be docile or comfortable being just social media advocates for good governance. We must aim for actual inclusion in mainstream and frontline governance. Nigerian youths must avoid shifting the blame to the past leaders, and instead work on shaping the future. The future belongs to the youths, but the future is not tomorrow. It already began yesterday. Nigerian youths must not get stuck reliving the past or passing blame.

The demographics of leadership in the world is getting younger, while we are still stuck with same old hands that milk the country of her resources and derail her journey on the path of sustainable development. Recently, the Not Too Young To Run Bill was passed, and as usual, the Nigerian youths are folding their hands and still waiting for those in government to create a springboard for them to participate in governance, forgetting that power is never freely given or relinquished. It is fought for.

It is time to take responsibility for the future, because it will not be inherited. It is time for us to end our blame game with our colonial history, our founding fathers, our present

leaders, and every other obstacle to making our country, Nigeria, great.

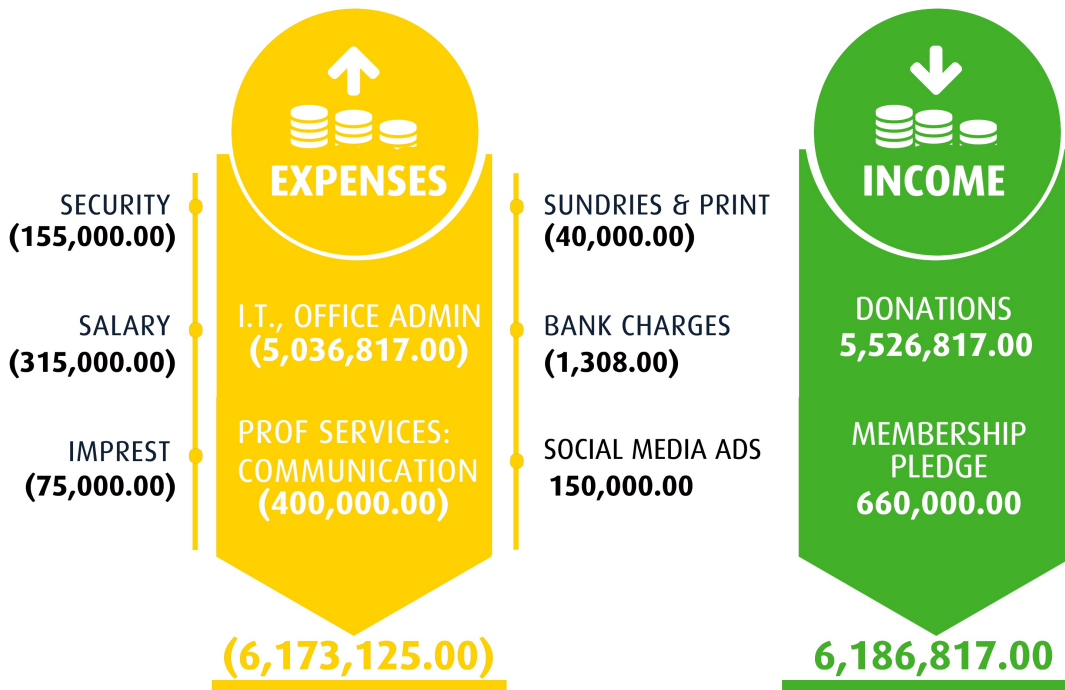
We are energetic youths, with innovativeness, ambition, ideas and a burning passion to succeed. We must be the greatest asset of our country. We must prove that we are not too young to participate and learn the ropes of politics and governance, neither are we too young to fight for the future we desire and surely deserve. It is time to make our way to relevance and shape the future of our collective dreams by joining a credible institution that has risen up to fill the vacuum in governance. An institution that is dedicated to achieving good governance by promoting a united Nigeria agenda and transparent political leadership and followership

that eschews money-politics, violence, repression and corruption.

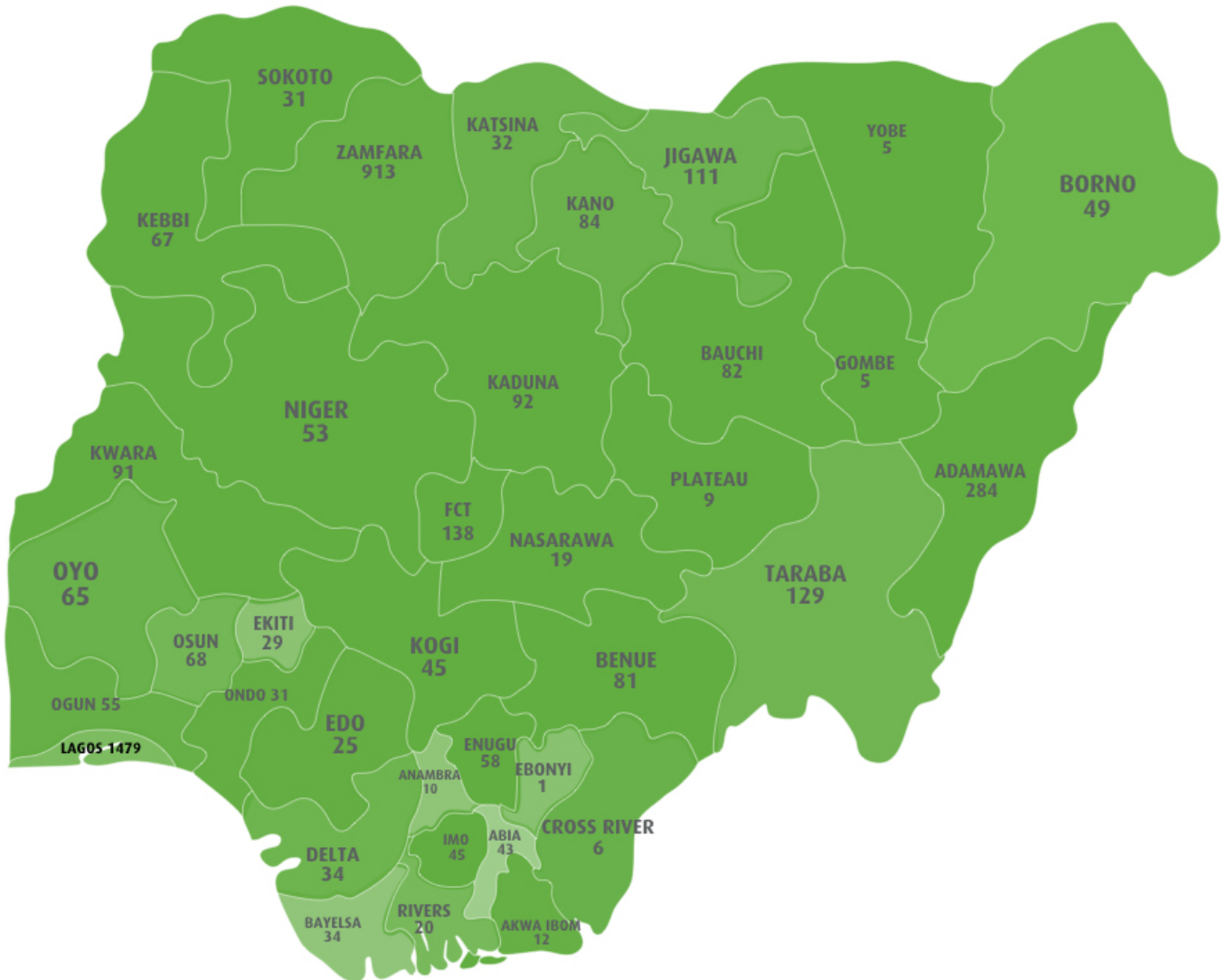
Nigerian youths have been marginalised in too many sectors of the country's socio-economic landscape, and there is need for greater participation in contributing to social justice and sustainable development. The real restructuring begins with our collective decision to graduate from being mere onlookers and bystanders to playing a leading role in politics and every other sector of the country's existence.

The time is more than right! The time is now!

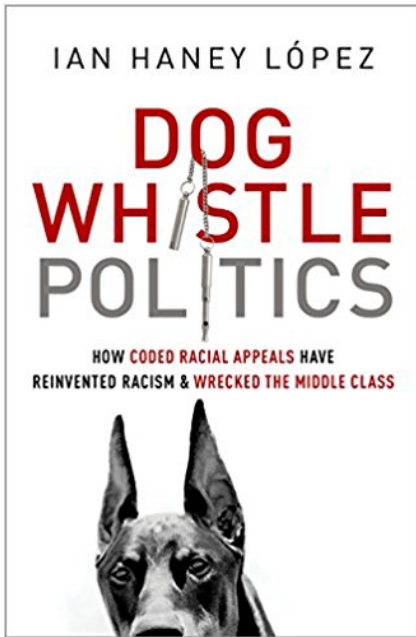
FINANCIALS FOR MARCH 11, 2018 - APRIL 12, 2018



Liabilities: 3,011,750.00



Total number of members as at April 18, 2018: 4,335



Dog Whistle Politics: How Racial Appeals Have Invented Racism & Wrecked The Middle Class

by Ian Haney Lopez

Review by Olasumbo Ajibade

BOOK REVIEW

Ian Haney Lopez's *Dog Whistle Politics* provides an assessment of modern racism and how race has become a political tool central to American electoral politics. According to Lopez, Racism in liberal America seems to have gone underground but it is still everywhere and has been successfully used for political advantage since its origination in the 1960s.

Lopez highlights "dog whistle" as a metaphor that explains the use of a coded language to pass coded messages to a targeted audience. He explains the practice of dog whistle politics, which he narrowed down to coded messages on race and how politicians have used it as a strategy in winning elections. Lopez opines that modern racism has gone beyond racial bigotry and racially offensive words such as the n-word. Today, the racist language uses is so inaudible and sounds neutral yet provokes strong reactions in the targeted audience and can be easily denied because it is subtle.

Lopez writes that Dog whistle politics is centered on strategic racism. The book explains "strategic racism:" as purposeful efforts to use racial animus as a leverage to gain material wealth, political power, or heightened social standing. It is a tool wielded by politicians to divide the electorate and win votes by fueling racial animosity towards people of other

racess. The author gives examples of politicians like George Wallace, Richard Nixon and Barry Goldwater - all originally racial moderates - who opted to use racial divisions as a political advantage in winning elections.

He writes that politicians have used coded messages to trigger fear amongst the white majority, especially by convincing conservative whites to think of government help in terms of race. Programmes that were originally meant to benefit the Whites, such as the New Deal Liberalism, came under attack once they were linked to favour undeserving poor minority race using racial appeals. This has contributed to attacks on welfare programmes, growing wealth inequality, and weakening of the middle class.

Lastly, he opines that dog whistle politics cannot evaporate by itself. Leaders, civil rights organisations, foundations, unions, and individuals must take conscious efforts to defeat dog whistle politics. Lopez states in the book that maintaining colourblindness is not enough to oppose dog whistle politics. Politicians respond to pressure and as such should be pressured to return to liberalism.