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Erratum: Isaiah 2:1–4 and insecurity in Nigeria: Towards building a non-violent society

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The publisher apologises for this error. The correction does not change the study's findings of significance or overall interpretation of the study's results or the scientific conclusions of the article in any way.

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Many societies in every era have engaged in efforts to resolve issues of insecurity and war and to create an environment for peace. Peace is a desirable value yearned for by many: but achieving peace is a difficult task. It is often marred by conflicts and wars, which militate against human and infrastructural development. Nigeria and many African countries are affected by conflicts and insecurity. During the period of Isaiah's prophecy, people had their own leaps of conflicts and insecurity. Isaiah envisioned a world where people of all nations will reject war and adopt a non-violent approach to conflict resolution (2:1–4). He proposed *Torah*-Education and disarmament as a recipe to peace. Isaiah called for a rechanneling of the resources used in war into creating implements of agriculture for the well-being of humanity. Isaiah's message of peace is quite ad rem to the realisation of security and peaceful co-existence in a multiethnic nation such as Nigeria. This article proposes a non-violent approach and peace education as a panacea to the problem of armed conflicts and insecurity in Nigeria. While the article does not negate the importance of defence and security, it calls for more investment in education and agriculture, which are key to human and infrastructural development.

Intradisciplinary and/or interdisciplinary implications: This article discusses how the integration of non-violent approaches in the fight against terrorism will influence terrorists to submit to reason and the achievement of sustainable peace and development.

Keywords: Isaiah 2:1–4; insecurity; war; nonviolence; agriculture; peace education.

Introduction

Peace is one of the fundamental desires of human beings in every society. Yet, the approach to achieving this peace takes various forms. Some try to achieve it through violence and some others through a non-violent approach. There are violent conflicts going on in many parts of the world today. Nigeria with a population of over 200 million people and with over 250 ethnic groups is surrounded by conflicts. The Boko Haram terrorists, bandits, armed herdsmen and kidnappers are terrorising the country with impunity, rendering the country insecure. While Nigeria is blessed with many natural resources such as oil, zinc, lead, natural gas, there is an alarming level of underdevelopment and poverty in the country. The problem of underdevelopment and poverty is orchestrated by bad governance, corruption, armed conflicts and insecurity. While the Nigerian government spends a chunk of the country's annual budget to purchase weapons aimed at addressing the problem of insecurity, the education and the agricultural sectors that impact positively on the well-being of the people are often not adequately funded. Should half of the money spent on arms and on security be used to develop education and agricultural sectors in the country, the well-being of the citizenry will be improved, and if the well-being of the citizenry is improved, many of the factors that exacerbate conflicts would have been tackled. Peace is a precondition for sustainable development. A peaceful environment is not created through warfare and armed conflicts but through a non-violent approach. The problem of violence and armed conflicts had bothered the people of Isaiah's time just as they are troubling and agitating the minds of Nigerians today. The prophet Isaiah envisioned a world where people of all nations will reject war and violence and embrace peace. This article, therefore, presents non-violence as a fruitful way to build a peaceful and prosperous nation.

Concept of non-violence

According to the online Cambridge dictionary, non-violence is 'a situation in which someone avoids fighting or using physical force, especially when trying to make political change'. Weber

defines it as an umbrella term for ways of life or the conducting of conflict in ways that do not permit doing of harm to humans (Weber 2008). According to him, as it provides a coherent and principled philosophy for living in harmony with other humans, non-violence builds a well-integrated and grounded person. It can be employed pragmatically as a useful set of tactics, which can be used in fights for social justice. Recently, it has motivated many activities of social movements aimed at evolving a political change (Weber 2008). The non-violent protests by the Nigerian youth tagged 'Endsars', which happened in 2021 is a classic example of the use of non-violence in resisting bad governance. However, many of the demonstrators were killed by government agencies.

Non-violence has three basic issues to address, which are geared towards achieving peace by engaging the oppression of the adversary. Firstly, it turns the attention of the adversary to the object of contention (Barbe 1989). Turning the attention of the oppressor to the object of contention is very necessary because in conflict, the conflicting parties tend to forget the cause of the conflict only to see themselves as enemies. Secondly, non-violence appeals to a third party. The third party can intervene and mediate in the contention while an appeal is made to the public at the same time for their attention. The third issue that non-violence tries to do is to find a powerful symbol capable of moving the hearts and minds of the people to join in the conflict. By so doing, it will reveal what really is at stake in the conflict (Barbe 1989). The use of non-violence as means to peace is central in Isaiah's oracle of peace (Is 2:1–4).

Isaiah's message of non-violence (2:1–4)

Isaiah 2:1–4 constitutes Isaiah's oracle of non-violence. Isaiah proclaimed his famous oracle of non-violence at the beginning of the 8th century B.C., at a time when the northern kingdom of Israel had been conquered by the Assyrians under Sargon II and Judah was under the threat of invasion by the Assyrian forces (Igbo 2018). Amidst the confusion and uncertainties of the Israelite society of his time characterised by threats of war, Isaiah envisioned a time when the nations would reject the arbitrament of war and embrace a peaceful and non-violent approach to conflict resolution.

The superscription (2:1) captions Isaiah's oracle of peace as 'the word [*haddāḇār*] that Isaiah, son of Amoz, saw [*hāzāh*]' concerning Judah and its capital city, Jerusalem. The Hebrew word *ḥāzôn* [vision] always refers to prophetic vision (Landy 2000). The two terms, *ḥāzôn* [vision] and *dāḇār* [word], are interchangeable in the prophetic literature. The word *haddāḇār* in Isa 2:1 carries the broader meaning of 'event'. The 'word' that Isaiah 'saw' (2:1) refers to God's desire or will for Israel and the nations (Watts 1985).

Zion: The centre of worldwide attraction (v.2)

The prophet foresees a radical transformation of history when the nations will live in peace and harmony under the reign of God (Tucker 2001). He situates the event that he foresees in an unspecific future ('in days to come'). The phrase, 'in days to come' [*be'aḥărîṯ hayyāmîm*] in Isaiah 2:1a points to an unspecific future (Blenkinsopp 2000; Lipinski 1970) but not necessarily the end of time.

Isaiah presents Mount Zion as the centre of worldwide attraction. He declares that 'in days to come', the 'mountain of the Lord' [*har-yhwh*] 'shall be established as the highest of the mountains'. The phrase 'shall be established' [*nāḵôn yihyeh*] points to a specific event that will happen in the future. The phrase, 'shall be established as the highest of the mountains', is parallel to 'shall be raised above the hills'. The term 'highest' [*berō'š*] here does not actually suggest a physical height; the term probably means most exalted in honour. Mount Zion is not actually the highest peak of all the mountains and hills in Palestine. The fact is that YHWH's Temple situated on Mount Zion lifts Zion's importance to supremacy, compared with other mountains and hills. Purely because YHWH is there, Zion attracts the nations.

Isaiah's declaration in 2:2d is poignant: 'all the nations [*kol-haggôyīm*] will 'flow' [*nāhărû*] to it'. The verb *nāhărû* ('will flow') in v.2d evokes river imagery (Fabry 1998; Martens 2007; Roberts 1982; Wildberger 1957). Isaiah employs this imagery to paint the picture of the movement of the nations to Mount Zion (Is 2:2; cf Mi 4:1). Normally streams flow down the mountain slopes, but the nations are literally viewed as flowing like water uphill to Mount Zion to seek the God of Jacob. Here, the natural laws of gravity are overcome by the magnetic hill of Zion. That the nations 'flow' uphill to Zion provides vivid imagery of Zion's importance (Igbo 2018). Zion is here portrayed as a place of the peaceful gathering of the nations, the focal point of mankind.

The motive of the upward flow to Zion

The motive of the pilgrimage of the nations to Mount Zion is introduced by the conjunction particle *kî* (that) in Isa 2:3b: 'That (*kî*) he may teach us his ways' [*weyōrēnû midderāḵāyw*]; 'and that (*kî*) we may walk in his paths' [*wenēlḵāh be'ōrḥōṯāyw*]. The nations [*kol-haggôyīm*], stream up to the mountain of the Lord ['*el bêṯ-yhwh*] and to the 'house of the God of Jacob' ['*el bêṯ-'ĕlōhê ya'ăqōḇ*]. The phrase 'mountain of the Lord' [*har-yhwh*] is in apposition to the 'house of the God of Jacob', [*bêṯ-'ĕlōhê ya'ăqōḇ*]. Here, YHWH is referred to as the 'God of Jacob' ['*ĕlōhê ya'ăqōḇ*]. The nations stream to Zion because they no longer want to live in conflict situations or war. Therefore, they come to Zion to learn the *Torah* and the

ways or conduct that YHWH prescribes and approves (Gray 1975) and to learn the lessons, which will eliminate war and enthrone peace among them.

The YHWH way learned on Mount Zion has effects on those who imbibe it. It brings about the transformation of the people's mindset, from a tendency to conflict, violence and wars to an embrace of peace and fraternal co-existence. It must be underlined that the primacy of Zion here is spiritual, not political. However, the spiritual significance of Zion has social and political effects as well (Musija 2011b). By streaming to mount Zion to learn YHWH's *Torah*, the nations acknowledge the universal sovereignty of 'the God of Jacob' and thereby submit themselves to his authority (Motyer 1993; Winkle 1985).

Torah-YHWH as secret of peace

Isaiah portrays the *Torah* as the way of righteousness, a guide to life and the secret of peace. In the OT, the term *Torah* means more than the Mosaic Legislation. The word can be translated as 'instruction' (Koehler & Baumgartner 2001). The *Torah* may also be understood as God's word mediated by a prophet (See Fantuzzo 2012). In the context of Isaiah 2:3, the *Torah* has the general sense of 'instruction' or 'teaching' of God, which provides guidance to humans (Brueggemann 1998; Gutbrod 1967; Harrelson 1962). In Isaiah 2:3, the two terms, *Torah* and 'word of the Lord' [*deḇār-yhwh*] are used synonymously for the same teaching. They are an expression of YHWH's will for the people (Gerleman 1997; Liedke & Peterson 1997; McKenzie 2002; Moriarty 1968; Myers 1987; Schmidt 1978).

The *Torah* directs one to do what is right and gives guidance to humans for the right living. When assimilated in the community, the *Torah* becomes the source of righteousness [*seḏāqāh*], the foundation of justice or right judgement [*mišpāṭ*] and the secret of peace [*šhālôm*]. Isaiah portrays YHWH's *Torah* as the principle, which provides the nations with a non-violent way to resolve disputes. When the nations are guided by YHWH's *Torah,* they are moved to drops aside their warlike tendencies and embrace non-violent approaches to conflict resolution.

Disarmament as a step to non-violence (Is 2:4)

The *Torah,* well imbibed, brings about human and societal transformation. As the Isaian text suggests, owing to the lessons learned on Mount Zion, the tendency of the nations to war and armed conflicts is reversed to the desire for peace. In v.4, the commitment to peace is expressed by voluntary disarmament among nations. Isaiah uses two sets of parallel statements to describe this disarmament process: 'they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation; neither shall they learn war anymore'.

'Sword' [*hereb*] and 'spear' [*ḥǎnît*] together represent the entire military arsenal. The transformation of weapons of war into implements of agriculture serves as a synecdoche for the whole of the disarmament process and a return to the era of peace (Igbo 2018). The nations [*haggôyīm*] will be so tremendously changed by the *Torah* education that they will no longer see any more need to train for war [*milḥāmāh*]. As there is no longer any risk of a nation being attacked by another nation, there will neither be any need for any nations to stockpile weapons of war nor to train for war. Such voluntary disarmament among nations can only happen when a complete change of mindset has taken place. As the Isaian text suggests, the encounter with the God of Jacob can effect a lasting change of mindset. 'Learning war' will be replaced by learning *Torah*' and practicing peace [*šhālôm*].

Non-violence: A way to peace

One of the ways to peace is the application of a non-violent approach to conflict resolution. This is the main thrust of Isaiah's oracle of peace (Is 2:1–4). Isaiah is not only a prophet of justice but also a prophet of peace and non-violence as Isaiah 2:3–4 makes clear. Violence includes hostile encounters, battles and wars. Violent conflicts are among the factors that perpetuate misery and underdevelopment in the society. Violence incubates conflicts and creates societal destabilisation. The culture of peace, on the other hand, engenders development. Jeden (2006) defines war as a particular kind of conflict that involves the legalised killing of enemies, including civilians and non-combatants. The devastation caused by war goes beyond the number of persons directly killed. Violence and armed conflicts set in motion a cycle of violence and conflicts. As Jeden rightly said, war leaves in its wake wrecked lives and a legacy of bitterness that all too easily becomes the seedbed for another war in an ever-escalating spiral of violence (Jeden 2006). Ekpenyong (2011) writes that conflicts have the capability 'to hinder, constrain or destabilise severely every developmental effort by destroying lives, infrastructure, interrupting the production circle and diverting resources away from productive uses'.

The menace of Boko Haram in Northeast Nigeria, the banditry and terrorist attacks on the nation is a case study. Violent conflicts disrupt the process of production, create conditions for the pillage of the country's resources and divert their application from developmental purposes to servicing war. In a bid to tame the tide of armed violence in the country, Nigeria spends a huge amount of money on security as Table 1 shows, whereas a meager budgetary allocation is given to agriculture and education.

Peace is founded on justice. There is a distinction between negative peace and positive peace. According to J. Galtung (2001), negative peace can be interpreted as the absence of violence, while 'positive peace' is 'the capacity to deal with conflict non-violently and creatively'. Negative peace involves interventions designed to prevent and mitigate direct violence. According to Galtung, peace intervention is considered

TABLE 1: Nigerian Budgetary Allocations from 2012-2021.

Year	Budgeted	Defence		Education		Agriculture	
		Allocated	Percentage	Allocated (N)	Percentage	Allocated (N)	Percentage
2012	4.877 trillion	921.91 billion	18.90	468.3 billion	9.86	4.9 billion	1.08
2013	4.99 trillion	1.055 trillion	21.14	426.53 billion	10.01	46.8 billion	1.07
2014	4.06 trillion	968.127 billion	21.05	494.7 billion	10.05	66.6 billion	1.04
2015	4.05 trillion	626.39 billion	13.92	484.2 billion	10.07	7 billion	0.09
2016	6.06 trillion	978.78 billion	16.15	369.6 billion	7.09	75.8 billion	1.03
2017	7.44 trillion	1.12 trillion	15.05	550.5 billion	7.04	136 billion	1.08
2018	9.12 trillion	1.26 trillion	13.82	605.8 billion	7.04	203 billion	2.00
2019	6.09 trillion	1.33 trillion	19.28	620.5 billion	7.05	137.9 billion	1.56
2020	5.37 trillion	1.71 trillion	31.69	671.7 billion	6.07	138.48 billion	1.03
2021	8.13 trillion	1.87 trillion	23.00	545.10 billion	5.06	179.3 billion	2.00
Total	**61.98 trillion**	**11.34 trillion**	**17.096**	**5.237 trillion**	**8.45**	**1.09 trillion**	**1.77**

Sources: https://www.budgetoffice.gov.ng/index.php/2012-budget
https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/422829-buharis-2021-budget-share-for-education-is-nigerias-lowest-in-10-years.html
https://www.vanguardngr.com/2018/07/security-fg-spends-n6trn-on-defence-in-11-years/
Adapted and structured by the authors.
(N), Naira: Nigerian naira.

positive if it contains social and cultural transformations that reduce structural and cultural violence and promote a more equitable social order that enhances both individual and societal development (2001). Anthony-Orji and Ezeme (2017) corroborate Galtung's view. According to them, positive peace is not 'the absence of war, fear, conflict; it is rather a state of harmony and justice'. These authors emphasise that peace 'is a dynamic social process in which justice, equity, and respect for basic human rights are maximized, and violence, both physical and structural, is minimized'. When justice becomes a stranger in the land, the community becomes susceptible to chaos and disorder. In the Encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno*, Pius XI said that 'justice alone can, if faithfully observed, remove the causes of social conflict' (1931). True peace signifies wholeness and harmony.

The practicability of Isaiah's vision of peace

Isaiah envisioned a warless world, a world devoid of weapons of war, a world where human and material resources are channelled to promote human well-being. However, a completely arms-free world, as Isaiah had envisioned it, is unrealistic. Nations will still need some weapons for security and to maintain law and order. That does not, however, mitigate the importance of Isaiah's oracle of non-violence. Disarmament, even if it involves only the removal of weapons of mass destruction, will go a long way in reducing tensions in the world. However, disarmament does not only mean a reduction or eradication of weapons of war; it also involves putting an end to injustice, oppression, hate speech and hateful and divisive ideologies that can ignite conflicts among humans.

True and undisturbed peace as Isaiah envisioned it are an eschatological reality. This notwithstanding the content of the hope expressed in Isaiah 2:1–4 is relevant to the present world wracked by violence [ḥāmās] and conflicts. A wholesome peace can be possible if there is a change of mindset among humans, international cooperation and non-violence. This idea is a central thrust of Isaiah 2:1–4.

The significance of Isaiah 2:4 to global peace

The desire of a world without war has long been a dominant theme in international relations. Yet, a careful reading of the irenic vision of Isaiah 2:1–4 reveals that the dream of Isaiah for an arms-free and a non-violent world is quite at odds with the state of things in the contemporary world. For, since the end of the second World War (1939–1945), there have been frantic arms race among nations. This fact, notwithstanding, Isaiah's vision of a peaceful, disarmed mankind has inspired some objectives and policy goals of the United Nations (UN). The influence of Isaiah's doctrine of non-violence, as Kemp (2000) and Reynolds (2017) have remarked, is demonstrated by a textual inscription of the words of Isaiah 2:4 on a granite wall of the UN building in New York: 'They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more' (see Figure 1).

Also, in the northern garden of the UN Headquarters in New York is a bronze sculpture of non-violence titled 'Let Us Beat Our Swords into ploughshares'. This statue created by a Soviet artist, Evgeny Vuchetich, and presented by the government of the then USSR to the UN on 04 December 1959, depicts the figure of a man holding a hammer aloft in one hand and a sword in the other, which he is beating into a ploughshare (see Figure 2).

This sculpture of non-violence symbolises, 'man's desire to put an end to war and convert the weapons of war into implements of agriculture and human well-being'. (Feid 2013). It demonstrates the influence of Isaiah's oracle of non-violence on the UN's drive for global peace. Isaiah's oracle of non-violence continues to provide a tacit impetus for nations today to co-exist in accord and goodwill. Since its foundation after the Second World War, the UN has continued to speak out against the use of violence, war, and nuclear weapons and has called for disarmament and the ban on nuclear weaponry. Despite these good initiatives, the proliferation of
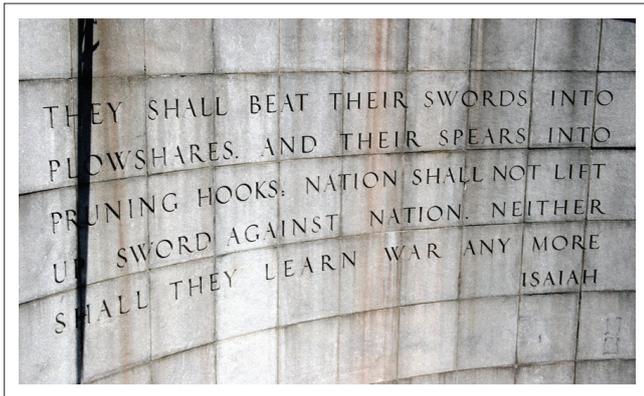
FIGURE 1: The image is a textual inscription of the words of Isaiah 2:4 on a granite wall of the United Nations building in New York. It demonstrates the influence of Isaiah's oracle of peace on the UN's drive for global peace. This image was retrieved from wikimedia.org, 20 September 2017.
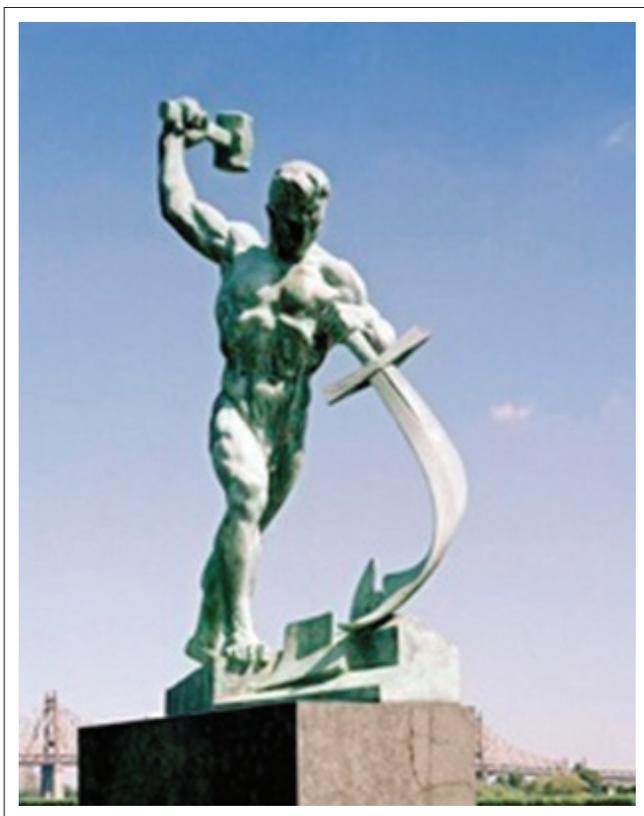

Source: Soviet artist, Evgeny Vuchetich, https://dam.media.un.org/archive/-2AM9LO123G8B.html

FIGURE 2: This statue of a man beating his sword into a ploughshare is located in the North Garden of the United Nations Headquarters in New York. The image, which was created by a Soviet artist, Evgeny Vuchetich, symbolises man's desire to put an end to war. This image was retrieved from wikimedia.org, 20 September 2017.

weapons remains an obstacle to peace in today's world and Nigeria, as the case at hand.

Disruptive effects of armed conflicts in Nigeria

Today, there is an ever-increasing spate of violence and armed conflicts in many parts of Nigeria. This is due, among other factors, to the proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW). The indiscriminate use of weapons by hoodlums and terror-minded persons contributes not only to the destabilisation of the country but also creates poverty, underdevelopment, marginalisation and insecurity.

Armed conflicts hamper human and infrastructural development in the conflict zones. For instance, the menace of the Boko Haram insurgency in the Northeast of Nigeria demonstrates the effect of violence and armed conflicts on human and infrastructural development in any nation. War causes devastation and loss of lives, destroys social infrastructure, hampers development and sets in motion a cycle of violence. After decades of civil war, war-torn countries lose much of their skilled workforce needed to rebuild the society. Potter (1994) notes that the psychological effects of the use of violence are devastating. It engenders ferocity and a spirit of revenge and generates a cycle of retaliation. It tends towards a relentless escalation beyond the limits originally envisioned.

The Papal teachings have over the years consistently addressed the danger of armed violence. In his Encyclical, *Pacem in Terris,* Pope John XXIII insists that war is never a suitable means of settling disputes. The Pontiff maintains that true and solid peace among nations rests on mutual trust, not on the use of war and violence (1963). Equally, John Paul II rejects violent solutions to problems and calls for solidarity among nations. John Paul's position is informed by the fact that violence destroys what it claims to defend, that is, the dignity of life and the freedom of human beings (1979).

Insecurity and its causes in Nigeria

The rate of insecurity in Nigeria reached a high level in 2009 with the emergence of a religious group known as Boko Haram in Bornu State, Northeast Nigeria. Its full name is *Jama'atuAhlisSunna Lidda'awatiwal-Jihad* (which literally means Western education is bad). The activities of Boko Haram are centred around Bornu in Maiduguri, Yobe, Taraba and Bauchi States. The Cult group, Ombatse, is based in Nasarawa terrorising the people around that political zone while the Fulani terrorist herdsmen are all over Nigeria. They carry out clandestine attacks with trained, masked and armed personnel, killing innocent people, burning homes, churches and schools, kidnapping and raping innocent school children and students and damaging their future and psyche. According to Animasaun (2015), while Boko Haram made the spread of the Islamic religion and eradication of education their points of agitation, the Fulani terror herdsmen want unrestricted access to land and total control of grazing areas everywhere in Nigeria. The ethnic agitators in the Southwest, Southeast and Middle Belt are making the security of life and properties worse. The struggle for resource control by the South-South militants is also strangling the economy of Nigeria. All these groups have become serious threats to the peace and security of the Nigerian people (Animasaun 2015). The Nigerian government has been spending billions

of dollars to procure arms for security purposes. Yet the problem of insecurity continues to increase.

Analysis

Table 1 shows the budgetary allocation by various Nigerian governments to security and defence, education and agriculture, from 2012 to 2021. This table shows the Nigerian budgetary allocation in the three areas of our concern: defence and security, education and agriculture. Looking at the figures, one notices the disparity and gap between what is budgeted for security and defence and what is allotted to agriculture and education for the 10-year period of our analysis. The Nigerian government is allocating much more money to security and defence at the expense of other sectors such as education and agriculture. Looking at the given table, we notice that the total sum of N61.975 trillion was budgeted by various Nigerian governments from 2012 to 2021. While the sum of N11.340 trillion naira was allotted to security and defence for the same period, which represents 18% of the total budget, education and agriculture were allotted the sum of N5.237 and N1.095 trillion, respectively, which represent 8.45% and 1.77%, respectively, for the period under review. The sum allotted to security and defence far exceeds the sum allotted to education and agriculture combined. The 8.45% and 1.77% allocated to education and agriculture, respectively, are far below the African benchmark of 15% – 20% for education and 10% recommended for developing countries.

Under the present Buhari administration (2015 to date), budgetary allocations for agriculture increase slightly, from 1.08% in 2017 to 2.0% in 2018. However, it fell again to 1.56% in 2019 and 1.3% in 2020 and slightly rose to 2% in 2021. Agriculture for all these years has not been given much budgetary allocation to make it the pillar of national economic growth despite all the talk on agriculture by the government. These years have seen high food inflation in Nigeria, especially as a result of banditry and the herder and/or farmer clashes. Many farmers have been displaced from their farmlands by terrorists who occupy the farmlands, preventing farmers from farming. Despite the huge budgetary allocation to defence and security, the menace of terrorism and insecurity has not been tamed.

The period under review has also seen a low budgetary allocation to education. The poor budgetary allocation of less than 10% of the annual allocation has seriously affected the standard of education in Nigeria. The welfare of public university lecturers has not been good, and for this reason, the lecturers have gone on strike severally since 2011 till date. The lecturers, as we write, have been on strike, which has lasted for 8 months (from February to October 2022) for unfulfilled promises and poor education funding. Students are at home. Many have been kidnapped and are still in their abductors' custody. Both parents and lecturers are concerned about the rate of academic disruptions, but the government of the day is not perturbed.

The conflict has affected the education sector; studies reveal that over 1409 students have been kidnapped since 2020. The first blow to the education sector was the kidnap of about 276 schoolgirls at Chibok in the North East region of Nigeria. Since then, over 600 schools have been closed in the midst of banditry, farmer/herder crisis and various terrorist groups (https://www.usip.org/publications/2021/07/how-mass-kidnappings-students-hinder-nigerias-future).
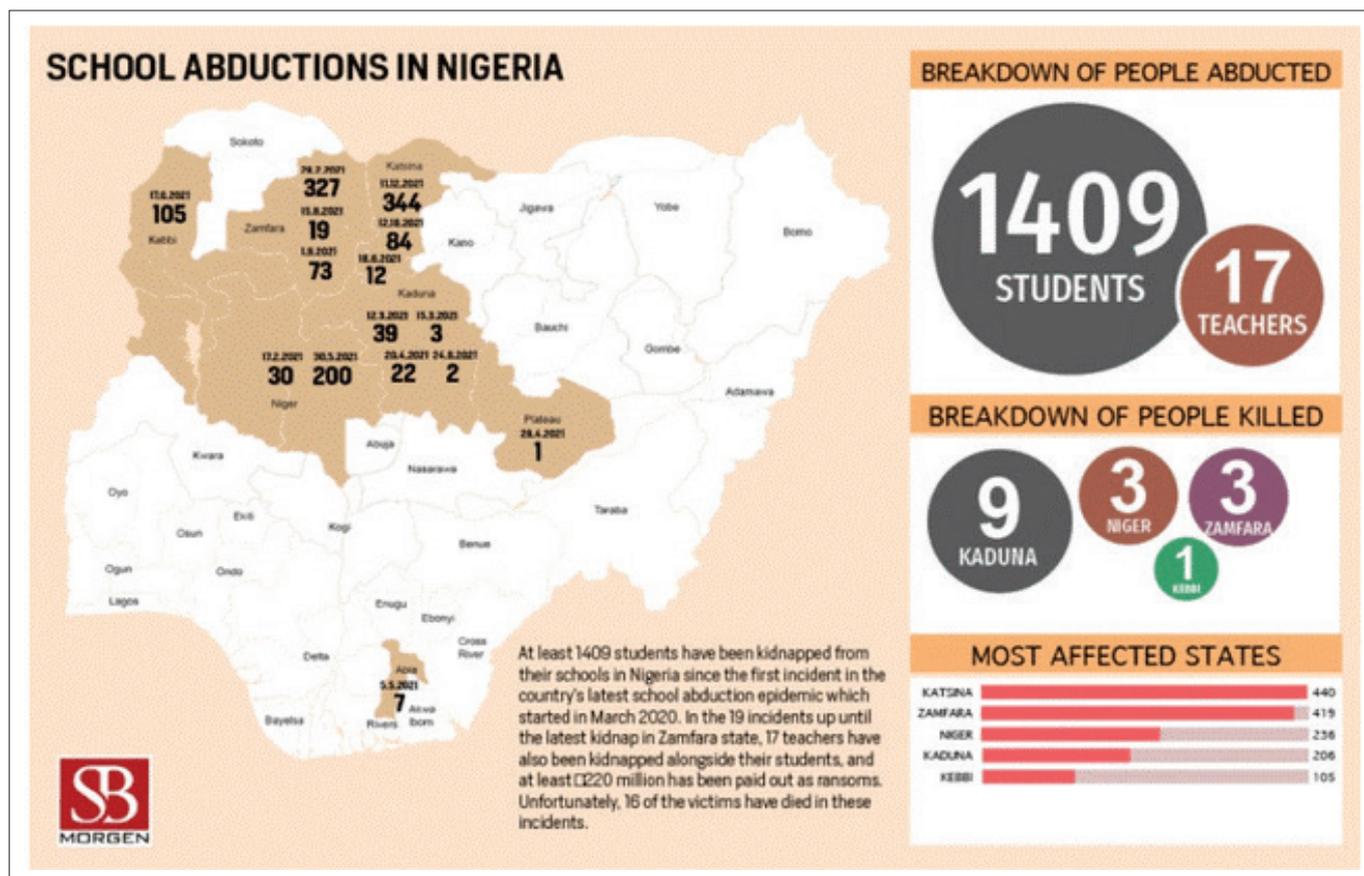
Figure 3 shows the number of school children kidnapped and teachers killed within the period under review.

The prophet Isaiah envisioned the importance of education and agriculture to societal development and human well-being. It was for this reason that he called for the destruction of weapons of war and asked that they should be transformed into agricultural instruments (Is 2:4). Isaiah recommended '*Torah* education' as a recipe for peace and nonviolence among humankind. Education is, therefore, necessary to understand how to make peace and apply non-violence.

Peace education: A panacea to conflicts in the society

One of the ways to eradicate violence and armed conflicts is through peace education. Isaiah 2:3 refers to it as *Torah* education. Isaiah portrays the *Torah* not only as the expression of the will of God but also as the rule of life and the secret to peace (Igbo 2014). Anthony-Orji and Ezeme (2017) define peace education as a deliberate attempt to educate children and adults on the dynamics of conflict and the promotion of peace. Peace education can lead to a change of mindset in people, from the tendency towards war to a desire for peace, from the production of the weapons of war to the development of agriculture, from the empowerment to destroy to the empowerment to build, from learning to make war to learning the art of being human (Igbo 2014).

Peace education can help in changing the culture of violence that we find in our present-day Nigeria, by emphasising on values of non-violence and fraternal coexistence among the tribes that make up Nigeria. The early acquisition of peace education can help in discouraging violent acts and encouraging peaceful acts. Any sincere commitment to non-violence in Nigeria must strive to root out the causes of war by addressing the problem of injustice, inequity, marginalisation and religious intolerance. Peace education, therefore, must emphasise justice, equity, tolerance and respect for the fundamental rights of people. The culture of peace is not created with the barrel of a gun but through participation, dialogue and cooperation. The culture of peace rejects violence in all its forms (Ekpenyong 2011). Peace education must confront the forms of violence that dominate society by teaching about its causes and circumstances and emphasising the value of non-violent alternatives to conflict resolution. This demands, therefore, a political will and structure that promote peace and human well-being.

Source: SBM Intelligence; https://www.usip.org/publications/2021/07/how-mass-kidnappings-students-hinder-nigerias-future

FIGURE 3: Glimpse overview of kidnapping of Nigerian students.

The security situation in Nigeria has overwhelmed the capacity of the ruling government. The government's approach to conflict resolution is, to some extent, counterproductive. It is important that this approach be modified as it is not yielding the expected result even as a lot of money has gone into the security vote. Though so much budgetary allocations have been made for security, insecurity and violence have worsened. Violence is seen as the outcome of an untransformed conflict.

Conclusion and suggestion

Isaiah's oracle of nonviolence is *ad rem* to the Nigerian context where conflicts and violence have become the order of the day. Isaiah's call to peace is hinged on a change of mindset, global disarmament (Is 2:4) and nonviolence. The viability of Isaiah's oracle of peace depends on the nations accepting the meaninglessness of violent approaches to conflict resolution. The enthronement of fraternal coexistence among nations can be, at least, partially realisable if all nations put in a straightforward commitment to peace. Commitment to peace always demands a personal and communal commitment to nonviolence. Though that alone may not stop wars completely, nor would it change the world overnight, it is a step towards a peaceful world. Peacemaking in any society is not an optional commitment; it requires that humans be proactive in standing against anything that engenders conflict in the society, such as injustice, inequity and oppression. Dialogue is indispensable to peace among humans.

The government needs to review the yearly budgetary allocation to security and pay more attention to education and agriculture for maximum development. If more money is invested in these areas, it will improve the well-being of the people, thereby minimising poverty, and if the problem of poverty and unemployment is addressed, many of the things that exacerbate conflicts will have been addressed. A major concern and attention to the government towards non-violence is the demobilisation of militant groups, the settlement of displaced persons back to their ancestral homes, economic reconstruction, and community rebuilding. To achieve these efforts, the collaboration of the Church, community and government is needed.

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Competing interests

Authors' contributions

C.O.O. contributed in conceptualising and writing of the introduction, non-violence, Isaiah's message on non-violence

and conclusion sections. P.M.I. contributed in drafting, conceptualising, writing about Zion: the centre of worldwide attraction, upward flow of Zion, disarmament step to non-violence, non-violence as a way to peace and editing of the entire manuscript.

Ethical considerations

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Data availability

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analysed in this study.

Disclaimer

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