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# COVID-19 AND HUMAN SECURITY IN NIGERIA

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## ABSTRACT

With millions of recorded cases of deaths and infections, coupled with the suspensions and disruptions of socio-economic and political activities in many parts of the world, COVID-19 is one of the most devastating pandemics to have occurred in the 21st century. While there is a consensus among scholars, schools of thought, governments, and international organizations on the nature and spread of the virus and that we are living in a post-COVID-19 era, the literature on its impact on human security is still at an embryonic stage, especially in developing countries such as Nigeria. This paper investigates the nexus between COVID-19 and human security in Nigeria. The paper primarily used documentary methods for data collection while also adopting the human security complex theory. COVID-19 has posed serious security threats to Nigerians' lives and property. The study shows that the pandemic had negative impacts on key human security sectors, such as cybersecurity, food security, human rights, and physical security in Nigeria. The Nigerian government lacks a broad-based approach to handling or mitigating the pandemic's impacts on human security. Developing economies will need to prioritize support for the recovery, reconstruction, and restoration of elements of human security affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. A sustained investment in health facilities, cyber security infrastructure, food security, and other livelihoods is required to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 and prepare for future similar pandemics.

**Keywords:** COVID-19, Human Security, Nigeria, Cyber Security, Food Security, Human Rights

## Introduction

Pandemics of varying degrees and magnitudes have dotted the history of mankind. From ancient times (Antonine Plague, Cholera Plague, Bubonic Plague, Justinian Plague, Spanish Influenza) to the contemporary era (Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), Ebola, Zika, COVID-19), plagues are recurring phenomena throughout human existence. Arguably, the growth and expansion of humanity worldwide also led to an increase in the recorded cases of infectious diseases (LePan, n. d.). As argued, plagues did not just lead to the demise of empires, the closure of cities, the sacking of towns, and the end of villages, but also led to the alteration of the socio-economic and political spheres of mankind (Huremović, 2019). The consequences of pandemics and the frequency of their occurrences pose a growing concern to scholars, think tanks, international organizations, and governments (Balkhair, 2020).

Nevertheless, the COVID-19 virus is one of the most destructive pandemics that have troubled the world in the contemporary era (Feehan & Apostolopoulos, 2021). This pathogenic and viral infection that is highly transmittable is known to be caused by Severe Acute

Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). Undoubtedly, there is widespread agreement that the virus originated in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China, in December 2019 (Lu, Stratton & Tang, 2020). Due to the COVID-19 worldwide spread, it was declared a global pandemic by the World Health Organisation (WHO) on March 11, 2020 (Rothan & Byrareddy, 2020). Although the modes of transmission of COVID-19 are still unclear, there are intellectual agreements that coming in contact with the droplets or secretions of infected individuals without protection appears to be the predominant mode of transmission from human to human (Huang et. al., 2020). Human contact or droplets largely transmit this highly contagious, deadly virus. The COVID-19 virus has infected millions of people, and its complications have claimed millions of lives. The United Nations (UN) website reports that the COVID-19 virus is currently affecting over 214 countries, resulting in over 39 million recorded infections and over 1 million deaths. Similarly, Alegado (2020) observed that the pandemic had cost the global economy over 1.4 trillion dollars.

Undoubtedly, there is growing and burgeoning literature on COVID-19 from scholars in diverse disciplines (WHO, 2020). Scholars of social science extraction have also joined the bandwagon in paying robust and sophisticated attention to COVID-19, especially its socio-economic and political impact on the individual, society, the state, and the international system. Within security discourse, the impacts of COVID-19 on human security are beginning to receive grounded and rounded intellectual interrogation. This is because of the great danger the pandemic poses to human security. For instance, it is estimated that the disruption in work as a result of COVID-19 affected over 2.7 billion workers around the world, which is equivalent to four out of every five members of the world workforce, and also that the fate of the 1.6 billion workers in the informal sectors are at stake given that they are the most vulnerable (ILO, n.d.).

These emerging studies took advantage of the need to move security discourse away from being state-centric to being people-oriented and offered fresh insights into how COVID-19 affected and undermined human security (Abbott, n.d.). For example, it was observed that COVID-19 made the entire world understand that the attention of the current global security architecture, which is heavily skewed to focus on states and institutions, should be re-examined to bring human beings from the margin to the centre (Lorenzo, n.d.). It argued that:

> This pandemic has demonstrated that hinging security on state security alone will leave individual states and the global community in a precarious position if it is not tied to the security of individuals and does not incorporate inter-state cooperation. It regards how other facets of life impinge on the life of an individual, not just locating it at the state level (Lorenzo, n.d.).

No doubt, COVID-19 showed the entire world that insecurity and security concerns are beyond weapons and conflicts. More so, the impact of COVID-19 on human security probably led the UN to create a new unit called the Advisory Board on Human Security (ABHS). While the impact of COVID-19 on human security now competes for the attention of scholars and international organizations, however, the academic enquiries on the nexus between COVID-19 and human security in developing countries such as Nigeria are still emerging, even though already existing issues of unemployment, insecurity, human rights abuses, cybercrimes, and hunger became much entrenched as a result of the virus (Oriola & Knight, 2020). Put differently, despite the established link between COVID-19 and human security in literature (Ani et al., 2022; Kumar, 2022; Oluka, 2022; Newman, 2021; Etodike et. al., 2021; Ramadhan, 2021; Sayamov, 2021; Nurhasanah, Napang, & Rohman, 2020) and among international organisations, little intellectual attention has investigated how the pandemic affected human security in Nigeria. To this end, the central focus of this study is to investigate the nexus between COVID-19 and human security in Nigeria. To achieve this purpose, this paper is divided into five sections. The first part of the paper looked at the origin, dynamics, and manifestations of COVID-19 in Nigeria. The second part of the paper dwelt on the definition

of human security, x-raying its relationship with COVID-19. The third part focuses on the impact of COVID-19 on different parts of human security, such as cybersecurity, food security, human rights, and physical rights.

## Materials and Methods

This study adopted a qualitative research approach to investigate how COVID-19 impacts critical elements of human security in Nigeria. The qualitative method focuses on the secondary method of eliciting data from existing sources. The studies reviewed include peer-reviewed literature and grey literature published from 2020 to 2024. The study included only studies published in English about the social aspects of COVID-19.

The documentary method employs descriptive analysis of documents containing essential information about the phenomenon under investigation. The documentary method is "the techniques used to categorise, investigate, interpret, and identify the limitations of physical sources, most commonly written documents, whether in the private or public domain" (Mogalakwe, 2006, p. 221). A qualitative method emphasises strictly the qualities of entities, processes, and meanings that cannot be experimentally evaluated or measured in terms of quantity, amount, intensity, or frequency. The principal aim of descriptive research is to project the phenomenon under investigation and elaborate its characteristics. In descriptive research, information collected qualitatively may be analyzed quantitatively, making use of frequencies, percentages, averages, or other statistical analysis to establish a relationship (Nassaji, 2015; Umar, 2016). To understand the impact of COVID-19 on human security in Nigeria, the following sections of this study explore the various ways the manifestations of COVID-19 have undercut the various spheres of human security, such as cybersecurity, food security, and human rights, among others, in Nigeria.

## Results and Discussions

### *COVID-19 in Nigeria: Spread and Responses*

Data on the dynamics, manifestations, and trajectory of COVID-19 in Africa shows that an estimated 41,672 persons have died, with 1,738,877 persons infected by the pandemic in Africa (https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-53181555; https://covid19.who.int/). Given that the population of the continent is over 1,3 billion people, the reported cases of deaths and infections per capita in Africa are quite low when compared with other parts of the world (Ryder & Lynch, 2020). These have continued to mesmerize scholars, policy analysts, public health practitioners, schools of thought, and international organisations. This is anchored on the fact that the health care systems of many African states are poor, and a majority of them are suffering from various degrees of conflict, poverty, and unemployment, among others, limiting their capabilities to tackle and respond to public health emergencies and pandemics such as COVID-19 (Martinez-Alvarez et. al., 2020).

Despite various assumptions and postulations regarding the low incidence of COVID-19 infections and deaths in Africa, such as a younger age distribution (Adams et al., 2021), a physically active population (Wachira et al.), which has been associated with lower infection rates (Chastin et. al., 2021), and the use of antimalarial drugs (Lalaoui et. al., 2020), Nigeria and South Africa stand out among the countries in Sub-Saharan Africa in terms of reported deaths and infections from the pandemic. To be specific, the COVID-19 data from both countries show that there are over 715, 868 infections and 1,130 deaths in South Africa, and reported cases of 61,992 infections and 1,130 deaths in Nigeria (see https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/nigeria-population). The Nigerian government's response to this global pandemic may arguably account for the extremely low reported cases of infection and deaths in the country compared to its estimated population of

200 million people (Odunsi, 2020). We can categorise the Nigerian government's response into pre-COVID-19 and post-COVID-19 phases.

First of all, even before the World Health Organisation (WHO) declared COVID-19 a global pandemic on March 11, 2020, and the first COVID-19 index case was recorded in Nigeria on the 27th of February, 2020, the Nigerian government announced a pre-COVID-19 measure that includes an increase in the monitoring and surveillance of passengers at the various international airports in the country. This was done to check and possibly quarantine passengers coming from countries with a high rate of COVID-19 infections and deaths. Also, in line with the pre-COVID-19 measures, the Nigerian government created a COVID-19 index system to track and keep the public updated on any related developments as regards the pandemic (Ogundele, Omotoso & Fagbemi, 2020). In this context, it was noted that the Nigerian Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) created and trained in late December 2019 rapid response teams across the 36 states in Nigeria while setting up a coronavirus group to respond to any emergency.

Nevertheless, the first index case was recorded in Nigeria. It was an infected Italian expatriate who arrived in Lagos on a business trip thereby spreading the virus. As a result, the Nigerian government introduced post-COVID-19 measures to tackle the virus. These include lockdowns, restrictions on interstate movement, social and physical distancing measures, and compulsory wearing of face masks and washing of hands, which fall under the umbrella of public health measures (Martinez-Alvarez et. al., 2020). Despite these measures, the prevalence of the virus increased in the country, as shown in the data above. Although cases of the virus have remained confined to states with a high rate of urbanization such as Lagos and Abuja, pockets of cases have been recorded in many parts of the country (Odunsi, 2020). In trying to curtail the virus, the Nigerian state declared a travel ban to 13 countries with a high prevalence of the COVID-19 virus, while Nigerians returning to the country were forced to self-isolate for two weeks (Ogundele, Omotoso & Fagbemi, 2020). The Nigerian state implemented a lockdown, ensuring that both private and public schools, from primary to university, airports, stores, markets, banks, churches, mosques, and places of large mass gatherings, among others, were under lock and key. Providers or outlets of essential services like banks and markets were later allowed to open partially within a given time frame. The total lockdown or partial lockdown was done to tackle the spread of the virus.

Going further, the Nigerian government also deployed medical personnel with seasoned experience in public health emergencies, and many medical practitioners, including doctors, nurses, and other medical staff members, were trained and deployed to designated isolation centres to help treat those who are infected and thereby curtail the spread of the virus. Also, a plethora of agencies and organizations, both government and privately owned, immensely helped in the publicity of public health-related measures such as frequent hand washing, avoiding touching one's eyes, nose, and mouth; practicing respiratory hygiene, and social distancing (Nigeria Centre for Disease Control, 2020). The public and private sectors made concerted efforts to educate Nigerians on health-related COVID-19 measures through both old and new media platforms. Social media platforms such as X, Facebook, and Instagram, among Others were used to sensitize the Nigerian public on COVID-19 and other health-related measures to curtail it (Obi-Ani, Anikwenze & Isiani, 2020).

*COVID-19 and Cyber Security in Nigeria*

No doubt, COVID-19 has significantly affected the world. Due to the measures put in place, such as total and partial lockdown, curfew, and shutting down of the airports, among others, to curtail the spread of the virus, many people in different parts of the world now work and school from home (Premium Times, 2020). These changes pose serious threats not just to

the cybersecurity architecture of many countries; they also constitute a serious challenge to the lives and properties of many individuals (PWC, 2020). It was observed that:

> Working from home presents significant risks to organizations because cybercriminals around the world are capitalising on this crisis, and that makes the need to secure the remote workforce an ever-growing concern. Since the outbreak began, there have been spikes in cyberattacks as cybercriminals are using COVID-19 as bait to trap organizations and their employees (PWC, 2020, n.p.).

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), a top security unit of the United States of America (USA), noted that cybersecurity attacks during the period of COVID-19 increased by 300 per cent (England, 2020). For example, it has been noted that there is an increase in phishing attacks, malware, and ransomware attacks as many cybercriminals hide under the rubric of COVID-19 to impersonate, trick, and hijack brands, confusing workers, organizations, and other end-users of the internet (Aladenusi, 2020). Also, the safety of many phones and personal computers is challenged now more than ever before because of the multiplicity of fake COVID-19-related applications masquerading as legitimate ones to compromise the security of the devices and/or steal valuable information.

Although the internet penetration in Nigeria is not high, there are pieces of evidence that millions of Nigerians are active users of the internet. According to statistics, there are over 92.3 million users of the internet in Nigeria, and it is projected that the figure will likely increase to 187.8 million in 2023 (Statista, 2023). Many people, governments, and corporations now make use of the various information and communication technology platforms to communicate, inform, educate, connect, and even do transactions. Due to COVID-19 in Nigeria and the various measures put in place to tackle it, many employees are now working from home, while many students of some private institutions are also learning virtually, especially through the use of a virtual private network (VPN). It has also been argued that VPN now serves as a lifeline to many organisations especially companies and schools, however, the greatest challenges facing the use of this medium for business and schooling have to do with their security and availability (Aladenusi, 2020). Many of these organisations and individuals are not adequately prepared or properly trained to handle effectively and efficiently their cybersecurity architecture which may lead to the exposure of sensitive information on the internet. The tendency to unknowingly share official documents and information while working from home is quite high given how unprotected the personal computers and phones of many individuals are wired. The figure below shows the percentage of cyberattacks in Nigeria during the period of COVID-19.

**Table 1: Types of Cyber Security Attacks in Nigeria During the Period of COVID-19**

| S/N | Types of cybersecurity attacks | Percentage | Frequency (using a total reported incidence of 12,988,978) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Phishing | 55% | 7,143,438 |
| 2 | Malicious Websites | 32% | 4,155,192 |
| 3 | Malware | 28% | 3,637,277 |
| 4 | Ransome ware | 19% | 2,468,895 |

**Source: Omodunbi, *et al* (2020)**.

Table 1 shows the extent of cybersecurity attacks in Nigeria during the period of COVID-19. It shows that phishing and malicious websites are the most popular cybersecurity threats in Nigeria. In addition to this, the use of personal computers to perform official duties poses a great deal of risk to organizations and can lead to a security breach (Allianz, n.d). For

example, it has been noted that while 51% of companies in Nigeria can withstand cybersecurity attacks and breaches, 71% noted that since the pandemic started, they have witnessed an upsurge in cybersecurity threats (HLPE, 2020). Table 2 below gives a glimpse of cybersecurity threats faced in Nigeria during the period of COVID-19.

From the human security perspective, many organisations laid off a majority of their workforce to cope with the impact of the virus on their businesses. Many of these organisations automated their activities, took their businesses online, and/or established a stronger presence online. The side effect of this move is that it led to a loss of jobs and other means of livelihood. COVID-19 and its socio-economic and political impact provide ample opportunities for many persons affected to turn to cybercrimes to earn a living (PWC, 2020). The upsurge in cybercrimes in Nigeria within this period might not be unconnected with the sacking of workers by many companies in Nigeria. Access Bank Nigeria is among many of the companies in Nigeria that laid off their workers citing the harsh impact of COVID-19.

*Covid-19 and Food Security*

The impact of COVID-19 on food security cannot be overstated. This is because the complexity of the food supply chains and the importance of trade and transportation make the entire food security architecture extremely vulnerable to shock, disasters, disruptions, and pandemics (World Bank, 2020). To be candid, the COVID-19 pandemic is directly influencing food systems by aggravating the worsened state of the food crisis worldwide. Hitherto, over 600 million people were suffering from food insecurity worldwide. However, with the emergence and expansion of the virus, it is estimated that close to 130 million people will be food insecure before the end of 2020 (UN, 2020).

As earlier stated, even before the COVID-19 pandemic, food security has always been a recurrent problem worldwide. According to the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), it is estimated that nearly 690 million people are hungry, representing 8.9 per cent of the world population. Although the majority of the world's undernourished (381 million) are found in Asia, Africa is home to over 250 million undernourished persons and is also regarded as the continent with the fastest-growing number of persons who are without food. Africa is one of the most fruitful laboratories for the study of food insecurity in the world today especially in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) where a majority of the undernourished people are located (UN, 2020). Hunger is a recurring decimal in SSA because it is estimated that since 2015, there has been an increase of over 32 million undernourished persons, especially in Western and Eastern SSA (UN, 2020). Africa is indeed among the continents that are currently facing the problem of the food crisis in the world today. The FAO stated that one out of every five persons is hungry in Africa, making it the continent with the highest rate of hungry individuals worldwide (FOA, 2020). Africa is where the highest levels of total food insecurity are observed. The regional FAO report for Africa noted that 258 million people are hungry in Africa with 17 million in Northern Africa and 239 million in SSA (FOA, 2020). No doubt, this is a confirmation of the prevalence of undernourished persons in SSA.

Sadly, the food security situation in Nigeria is a huge concern. The 10-year-old Boko Haram insurgency in north-east Nigeria and also around the Lake Chad Basin and the various counterinsurgency measures of the different governments involved have undermined food security in the region. Over 3.5 million people living in North-East Nigeria and the Lake Chad Basin are in urgent need of food assistance (FAO, 2020). There is no iota of doubt that factors such as climate change, desertification, low agricultural outputs, poor economic growth, and ineffective government policy have ensured that food security remains a major challenge in Nigeria.

More worrisome is the advent of COVID-19, which has further worsened the parlous state of food insecurity in Nigeria. Between January and October of 2020, the prices of food

products have not just skyrocketed but are no longer affordable to the larger population of Nigeria. The effect of COVID-19 on food security is already being felt in Nigeria because they noted that food inflation moved from 14.7% in December 2019 to 15% in April 2020 (PWC, 2020). Table 2 below shows the prices of food items between January 2020 and July 2020.

**Table 2: Prices of Some Selected Food Products in Nigeria**

| Items | Jan-20 | Feb-20 | Mar-20 | Apr-20 | May-20 | June-20 | Jul-20 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Agric eggs medium size | 454.17 | 448.26 | 461.15 | 476.72 | 462.46 | 472.8259 | 474.1182 |
| Beans brown, sold loose | 285.61 | 276.30 | 267.81 | 277.05 | 277.49 | 289.8889 | 300.2623 |
| Beans: white black eye. sold loose | 268.80 | 255.25 | 241.74 | 250.33 | 251.43 | 259.386 | 268.379 |
| Beef Bone-in | 1031.53 | 1035.38 | 1025.48 | 1047.12 | 1053.47 | 1069.853 | 1075.676 |
| Beef, boneless | 1289.80 | 1279.60 | 1276.10 | 1307.68 | 1306.47 | 1317.043 | 1330.827 |
| Bread sliced 500g | 302.45 | 303.06 | 304.60 | 316.55 | 315.00 | 320.0986 | 318.5574 |
| Bread non-sliced 500g | 276.26 | 275.20 | 278.79 | 288.45 | 285.17 | 284.5111 | 287.7391 |
| Palm oil: 1 bottle, specify bottle | 457.59 | 457.31 | 451.37 | 464.08 | 463.50 | 473.7527 | 486.2548 |

| Items | Jan-20 | Feb-20 | Mar-20 | Apr-20 | May-20 | June-20 | Jul-20 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Broken Rice (Ofada) | 409.31 | 404.32 | 390.54 | 408.05 | 405.58 | 420.3145 | 426.3635 |
| Evaporated canned milk(peak), 170g | 185.63 | 183.81 | 183.12 | 190.17 | 190.00 | 191.7069 | 193.029 |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Frozen chicken | 1983.14 | 1948.59 | 1941.04 | 1958.10 | 1944.56 | 1950.471 | 1955.535 |
| Gariwhite, sold loose | 159.64 | 159.33 | 164.60 | 190.23 | 196.16 | 214.733 | 222.4739 |
| Garri yellow, sold loose | 182.19 | 186.35 | 192.41 | 211.83 | 222.25 | 241.5784 | 255.1041 |
| Groundnut oil: 1 bottle, specify bottle | 571.88 | 572.36 | 583.22 | 601.03 | 601.14 | 620.3124 | 623.0892 |

**Source: Nigeria Bureau of Statistics (2020)**

From Table 2 above, the prices of food increased between January and June 2020. This increase is largely caused by COVID-19. Though there are other causes of food insecurity in Nigeria, which include banditry and Boko Haram insurgency, among others, however, the emergence of COVID-19 heightened the precarious state of food insecurity in Nigeria. According to the Famine Early Warning System, due to COVID-19, 6 to 7 million people are expected to require humanitarian food assistance (WFP & FAO, 2020). A period that witnessed below-average harvest, high prices of staple food, and low income will further push Nigerians down the chasm of poverty.

*Covid-19 and Human Rights*

The connection between COVID-19 and human rights cannot be overemphasized. Activities by various governments to limit and/or eradicate the virus have led to serious challenges to the rights of individuals in many parts of the world. These measures include lockdown, curfew, isolation, quarantine, and travel ban, among others. In this context, Hostmaelingen and Bentzen (WFP & FAO, 2020, n.d.) noted that:

> States across the world employ far-reaching measures to handle the coronavirus outbreak. Time and resources are limited, and there is immense pressure to introduce effective measures and to scale them back at the appropriate time.

It was argued that the degree and intensity of the virus justify the restrictions on certain rights of individuals especially as regards freedom of movement and association, however, these measures if not carefully framed and implemented will lead to cases of discrimination and loss of human dignity (UN, 2020).

Ironically, the above scenario played out in many countries, including Nigeria, where measures taken to tackle the spread of COVID-19 impinged seriously on the rights of individuals and groups without recourse to transparency or human values. To limit the spread of COVID-19, the Nigerian government took some measures that affected the rights of groups and persons in the country (Onyemelukwe, 2020). While many of these measures are in tandem with global public health practices, they have also raised significant constitutional and human rights issues. For instance, the Federal government of Nigeria and other state governments issued lockdown directives that required full implementation by police, army, and other security agencies, however, many of these directives failed to stipulate means to implement the measures or penalty for offenders (Onyemelukwe, 2020). The net result was that it led to many

cases of human rights abuses because persons alleged to have violated the lockdown measures were treated to the whims and caprices of the security agents of the government. These persons were arrested, locked up, killed, and fined, among others. Put differently, the absence of a unified and codified means of punishment for offenders of the lockdown measures led to human rights abuses during the period of COVID-19.

Corroborating this fact, the National Human Rights Commission (2020) in Nigeria as of April 14 (2020) recorded over 105 complaints on the violation of human rights linked to the enforcement of COVID-19 measures. 24 out of the 36 states in Nigeria witnessed a high level of human rights abuses due to COVID-19-related measures. Going further, the report noted that personnel of the various security agencies in the country have extrajudicially killed close to 29 persons while trying to enforce lockdown measures in the various parts of Nigeria. Table 3 below gives a breakdown of states with incidents of COVID-19-related human rights violations.

**Table 3: States with incidents of human rights violations**

| States | Number of complaints/ incidences of human rights violation | Number of extra-judicial killings |
|---|---|---|
| Abia | 7 | 2 |
| Adamawa | 1 | Nil |
| Imo | 4 | Nil |
| Enugu | 1 | Nil |
| Ekiti | 3 | Nil |
| Edo | 1 | Nil |
| Ebonyi | 3 | 1 |
| Rivers | 5 | Nil |
| Plateau | 1 | Nil |
| Osun | 2 | Nil |
| Gombe | 3 | Nil |
| Ogun | 1 | Nil |
| Niger | 2 | 1 |
| Nasarawa | 5 | Nil |
| Lagos | 28 | Nil |
| Kwara | 2 | Nil |
| Kogi | 1 | Nil |
| Katsina | 1 | 1 |
| Kaduna | 3 | 12 |
| Akwa Ibom | 3 | Nil |
| Bayelsa | 1 | Nil |
| Benue | 2 | Nil |
| Cross River | 1 | Nil |
| FCT | 10 | Nil |
| Delta | 6 | 1 |

**Source: Compiled from the National Human Rights Commission (2020)**

From Table 3 above, with 28 and 10 cases, respectively, Lagos and the Federal Capital Territory had the highest number of human rights violations caused by COVID-19. This may be because both areas recorded a high number of COVID-19 cases, and it became imperative to forcefully implement lockdown measures to tackle the spread of the virus in these areas. Table 4 below shows the killings by law enforcement agencies in Nigeria during the period of COVID-19.

**Table 4: Case of Extra-Judicial Killings by Law Enforcement Agents During COVID-19**

| S/N | Name of the Law Enforcement Agency | No of Deaths |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Correctional Service | 8 |
| 2 | Police | 18 |
| 3 | Army | 2 |
| 4 | State Task Force on COVID-19 | 1 |

**Source: National Human Rights Commission (UN, 2020)**

From Table 4 above, the Nigerian police were largely responsible for the high number of extrajudicial killings recorded during this period of COVID-19. This might not be unconnected with the fact that the police are the major enforcers of the measures put in place to curtail the spread of the virus. Apart from killings, there were other forms of human rights violations, which include extortion, torture, and unlawful arrest, among others, that were recorded within this period (Onyemelukwe, 2020).

Furthermore, within this period, Nigeria also experienced a sharp increase in gender-based violence. In this context, the Inspector General of Police observed that between January and May 2020, over 717 cases of rape were recorded in Nigeria (Onyemelukwe, 2020). For Mrs Pauline Tallen, the Nigerian then Minister for Women Affairs, these alarming numbers of rape, which had escalated more than three times, were because many children, women, and men were trapped at home as a result of the virus (Onyemelukwe, 2020).

*Covid-19 and Physical Security*

The protection of lives, properties, and key infrastructural sectors of the state is quite central. Other spheres of security are important, especially during this period of COVID-19. Protecting and securing the lives, properties and other important critical infrastructure of society, such as banks, transportation, and energy, among others, is much more central to the continued existence of any state. To be sure, COVID-19 has altered the entire existence of humanity. An aspect of physical security that has to do with managing large gatherings such as airports, concert halls, sports, and stadiums for the protection of lives and properties are no longer the same. The pandemic has changed the calculus of physical security. Efforts are now being channelled towards maintaining measures to keep people alive. Put differently, the pandemic poses serious threats to the physical security of many people in different parts of the world.

**Table 5: Summary of Nigerian COVID-19 Fact Sheets (As of April 17, 2021)**

| Confirmed COVID-19 Cases | Cases of COVID-19 Recovery | Cases of COVID-19 Deaths | Active COVID-19 Cases | Number of COVID-19 Tests |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 164,719 | 154,926 | 2,062 | 7,731 | 1,924,294 |

**Source: Compiled from the NCDC (2021)**

From Table 5 above, and, despite the various measures employed by the government to tackle the virus, COVID-19 claimed the lives of many Nigerians. No doubt, this virus poses a serious challenge to the physical security of Nigerians.

## Conclusion

This paper tried to interrogate the nexus between COVID-19 and human security from the Nigerian perspective. This paper noted that cybersecurity, physical security, food security, and human rights abuses, among other aspects of human security, are currently facing numerous

challenges due to COVID-19. This paper observed that Nigeria faced increased challenges as regards hunger, cyberattacks, human rights abuses, and deaths as a result of COVID-19. However, developing countries will need to draw lessons for policymaking and implementation from the identified impacts of the pandemic. Emerging economies may now see the need to embark on significant investment in major aspects of human security, such as building cyber resilience at both the individual and the corporate levels. Ensure policies that support the recovery of food security, prioritise health facilities and the protection of human rights during a pandemic, and support the recovery of small and medium-scale enterprises.

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The lead author conceived, designed, researched, and produced the draft paper. Co-authors participated in the review, editing, proofreading, and effecting the post-review corrections. All authors discussed and agreed on the current shape and contents of the manuscript**.**

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