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Abstract
Despite adoption of democracy in Nigeria in 1999 and its constitutional provisions for human rights, there is still a colossal human rights violation in the country. Human rights in Nigerian democracy have been subjected to unabated violations by Nigerian government, security forces Boko Haram and Fulani Herdsmen. The study explored the impasse of democracy and human rights abuse in Nigeria and provided workable suggestions on how to confront the menace. The study provided feasible indicators of human rights abuses in Nigerian democracy in order to brace the claims in literature review. Documented evidence served as source of data while Pareto, Mosca and Michaels’ Elite Theory of state served as a framework for explication. The paper divulged that the syndrome inflicted on the Nigerian political system abounds and eats deep in the fabrics of Nigerian democracy. Corruption of the elite class and military involvement in Nigerian politics, therefore, formed the major problem to human rights and Nigerian democratic governance. Restructuring the Nigerian political system in order to do away with the bad eggs among the Nigerian elites becomes the way forward. More importantly, the reorganization of the Nigerian political system should be done in such a way that the military elites are denied access to political powers.

Key Words: Democracy, Human rights, Human rights abuse, Nigerian Democracy, Nigerian Governance.

Introduction
In human history, human rights have suffered a lot of violations beginning from the state of nature, through the colonial and military period (in some histories) down to the present democratic era. The state of nature is a stage of human history when there was no state or law to regulate or curtail human actions. This is a period that was accounted by social contract theorists to be characterized by wickedness, poverty, barbarism and brutality. Thomas Hobbes, one of the leading scholars of social contract theory in his gloomy view, accounted that human life in the state of nature has no value as human beings do whatever they like, kill whoever they can and take whatever they want. In the state of Nature ‘might is right’ and
human right violations was never accounted for. For this reason, human life was nasty, solitary, meager and very short. Even though some of the social contract theorists like John Locke and J. J. Rousseau tried to give a somehow appealing account of human life in the state of nature, their submissions still showed that human rights were profusely abused during the period. Because of this, the need for a contract that resulted to the establishment of modern states and laws to regulate human actions became unavoidably necessary.

The idea of modern state started in the ancient Greece, and subsequently extended all over Europe. Human rights even with the creation of modern states still face violations by the means of colonization of the African, Asian and Latin American countries by the European powers. Colonialism started in the 17th century following industrial revolution that occurred in Europe. This saw the need for the European economies to search for virgin and arable lands of Africa, Asia and Latin America, where they would market their finished goods and source raw materials for more productions. Human rights in Africa, Nigeria particularly, were violated through the practice of indirect rule system of government, slave trade, racism, hard and forced labour and other inhuman acts. Because of these reasons, struggle for nationalism began in among the European colonisers an attempt to secede from the ugly and wicked control of the colonial masters.

Nigeria’s independence in 1960 was a very big hope that human rights violation was going to be the things of the past, through indigenous rule. This hope lasted between 1960 and 1965 as it was terminated following the eruption of Nigerian civil war in 1966-1970, which equally saw to the seizure of power by the Nigerian military. The intensity of human rights violations during the period of the Nigerian civil war and its attendant of military rule was nothing to talk about. The military through their decree and austerity measures ruled the country and benched human rights. Ugly experience like killing of innocent citizens, arrest and detentions of oppositions, coups and counter coups, empty promises, and all other forms of inhumanities, were perpetrated during the military dictatorial regime. Even when the military handed over power to the civilian in 1979, they still regained political power in 1983 claiming that the civilians were still incompetent to rule the country. The incessant interruptions of the first, second and third republics in Nigeria by the military all saw unfathomable human rights violations.

The Nigerian military promise to hand over to civilians finally became a reality in 1988, and in 1999, Nigeria had its first election of the fourth republic. Chief Olusegun Obasanjo (Rtd) was victorious in the 1999 Nigerian presidential election of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Nigeria government was fashioned after the United States presidential system of government and was anchored on the principle of democracy. The constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria was drafted in 1999, with a clear enshrinement of the fundamental human rights of its citizens. Nigeria successful election of a civilian president, its 1999 constitutional provision for human rights and its adoption of democracy in 1999 raised citizens’ hope that human rights and general development of the country was going to be assured. Instead of this new hope to be realized, human rights in Nigeria have continued to be as bad as they were in the previous years of colonialism and military regimes.

Right to life of a human person has even been reported by some scholars to be more violated in the present day Nigerian democratic period more than it was in the pre-colonial and colonial period. On the account of this, Achebe in his celebrated Thing Fall Apart observed that, among the Igbos in Nigeria, human right to life was absolutely respected, even where a person killed another person in error, the offender had to be banished from his town for several years before other reconciliatory, cleansing, and compensatory processes followed (Ojo, 2006). Democracy in the country remains futile and never achieved any success since 1999 till date (20 years). Democratic principles, which are supposed to be perfect instruments for human rights protection in any society are therefore, seen as a curse to human rights in Nigeria, because of how they are handled by Nigerian political elites. This study, therefore, is set to interrogate the impasse and contradiction of human rights abuse and democracy in Nigeria from 1999-2019.
Methodology
This study is qualitative and descriptive in nature. As such, it relied on published materials as source of data collection. Data in this paper are analyzed and presented textually because of their qualitative and descriptive nature. This study was anchored on the analysis of the Elite Theory of Vilfredo Pareto, Getano Mosca and Robert Michaels. These classical elitists and co-founders of the Italian School of Elitism made significant impact in the evolution of the theory through their works. Elite Theory is a state theory that explains power relations between the elites and the general masses. The general assumption of the theory is that the society is divided into two: the elites and the masses. While the elites (governing and non-governing elites) are regarded as the ones knowledgeable enough to control economic and political powers, the masses are regarded as the apolitical clays that are economically poor and have no knowledge on how to organize the society. The theorist, submitted that the society is run by few elites who form oligarchs to make binding decision and decide conditions for the generation and distribute of state scarce resource. Nevertheless, the political and economic incapacitation of the masses to challenge the elites created the relational control that exists among these two classes.

Owing to the assumption of the Elite Theorists, the elites (governing elites) make binding laws that would favour their interests and those of their counterparts in other professions. In Nigeria, the elite class includes; those in governments, former government officials, high ranked officers of the security forces (most especially the military), retired major generals, general managers/managing directors of high profiled companies, captains of major capitalists industries like Shell Petroleum, Total oil, Dangote group, MTN etc. This group of elites has conditioned policy making process in a manner that will suit their interests to the detriment of the interests of the majority. Democratic dividends, consequently, become business ventures on a bargaining situation, to the favour of the elites class. In a situation whereby the elites neglect the wellbeing of the masses, human rights abuse becomes the resultant effect. Elections are rigged by the corrupt elites in order to install their choice of leader who would protect their interests. Boko haram, Fulani Herdsmen, Security Forces and the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) abuse human rights on a daily basis and the government plays nonchalance in order to curtail them. The government equally, in some cases, directly abuse human rights and sideline democracy for personal or group interests.

Democracy
Democracy is a practice that evolved in the ancient Athens (Greece), and has since then stood on the stronghold of majority oriented system of government. Majority rule, general human rights protection and rule of law are, therefore, the foundation of democracy. Democracy is a straight forward term when it comes to conceptual definition. Beyond this fact, democracy is impossible to be understood by its mere conceptualization or theoretical construct of its basic principles, rather it is more comprehensible in the realm of practice. In other words, democracy is known through its uniqueness in promoting good governance, through people oriented government that ensures human rights protection. A democratic system is, therefore, identified through the application of democratic principles by the government, in order to bring out the quality of human beings in the society. In response to this, Akinsanya, as cited in Ozoigbo (2017) succinctly viewed democratic system in terms of the extent to which elections are free and fair. To him democracy is measured by the extent to which a country has regular free and fair elections, devoid of malpractices and with citizens’ participation in the electoral process. In a similar vein, a democratic system is built upon freedom, justice and good treatment of all citizens by the state and must be an orderly and stable society infused with spirit of liberty, justice and rule of law (Presstore, 2013).

Although, the concept of democracy might be explained in different ways based on scholars’ perception, its basic principles never change, as they form its beauty. For the foregoing, Abraham Lincoln had earlier given a classical description of democracy as the government of the people, for the people and by the people. This particular explication of democracy gained popular subscription by many scholars because it succinctly captured the main ingredient of democracy which is majority rule and people management of
their state affairs, deciding their fate by themselves. Democracy is a system of government that allows the people to directly or indirectly exercise the governing power (Appadorai, 2003). This definition points at the fact that in a democratic system, the people both participate and exercise their political and other rights directly or indirectly through representatives, freely elected by them.

Democracy is viewed in a more broad term to mean not only a system of government that allows for majority rule in contravention to autocratic and monarchical principles, rather it also encompasses a state of political equality among people (Akinsanya, 2000). This explanation buttressed the centrality of political equality in a democratic system rather than a mere majority rule. Oluwole, as cited in Adagbabiri (2015) argued that democracy is more like a theory that which a good government, no matter its form, must run. Good governance here goes with principles like justice, freedom, equality, inclusiveness, accountability, transparency and openness in government.

Heater, as cited in Dike & Onyekwelu (2018) identified five variables without which a state cannot be considered to be democratic. These variables include equality, sovereignty of the people, respect for human rights and life, the rule of law within the context of fairness and/or prudent use of state resources for the overall enjoyment of the masses. These basic principles of democracy as provided above are beyond mere people participation in election to choose their leaders, as many thinks that is the only thing that qualifies a state to be democratic. This bring about the idea of democratization, when democracy is not instituted by only conducting election to replace military dictatorship by the civilians, rather it has to be established through the conscious efforts of the elites and political leaders over time. Such a process will involve political institutionalization, behavioral and attitudinal changes that standardize political and narrow uncertainty. Democratization, therefore, becomes the solution to democratic challenges, as it ensures that democracy is the only gain in town (Babatunde, 2015).

In a nutshell, democracy as a system of government allows for people participation in governance. Nonetheless, it does not only end in free and fair elections; rather it extends to include rooms for accommodation of public opinion in governance and general political and legal equalities. These principles are seen in ideal democracies. Unfortunately, what people believe to be an ideal democracy in this contemporary period of many democracies is purely a disguise. Elections in some democracies, most especially in the west, are free and fair, for this democracy is seen to be liberal and ideal in those countries, but definitely not. Zakaria (1997) responded to this when he argued that democracies are seen to be liberal in the west because of the obvious belief that elections in such society are free and fair, this is not true in the sense that democracy does not just end in free and fair elections. Zakaria condemned many democracies that claim to be liberal, and finally recommended for constitutional liberalism which allows for constitutional delimitation of the power of the political office holders. His reason for this is sprouted by his belief that constitutional liberalism, to some reasonable extent, curtails government powers and allows for peoples freedom. Imagine where democracy is faulted in some western countries where free and fair elections are at least believed to have taken place, what would be the case of Africa and other developing economies, Nigeria inclusive? The answer to this question remains that, if democracy is perceived to be partial in some western countries, then, there is no democracy at all in Africa, Nigeria to be precise.

Talking about free and fair elections, in Nigerian democracy, elections had since 1999 been flawed. Erosion in the Nigerian electoral process has continued to sway the conduct of election in Nigeria with utmost impunity. This doubtlessly, kept democracy in Nigeria in a perpetual cry for help. Since the end of the military rule and the switch to civilian rule in 1999, Nigeria has not improved in democratic and human rights records; rather it has continuously improved only its historical fraudulent and violent elections. This was evident in the 1999 election that brought the former President Olusegun Obasanjo to power that marred by widespread fraud (Human Rights Watch, 2007). It went further to state that the 2003 election was more pervasively and openly rigged than the flawed 1999 election, and far more bloody. Successive elections in Nigerian democracy remained flawed since 1999 till date, as they were never free and fair and were all considered rigged and violent. More than 100 people died in two week before the election and many political clashes caused by politician’s effort to employ and arm criminal gangs to defend their
interests and attack their opponents (Human Rights Watch, 2007). Even election for 774 local governments council chairmen, held nationwide in 2004 were also characterized by violence, intimidation and fraud. In Nigeria, democracy has been a different ball game since it was adopted in 1999 and Democratic principles seemed very impossible to be domesticated in Nigerian governance. Democracy which is supposed to be a vital system for good governance and socio-economic development has turned to a subject of mockery by those who handle it. Some scholars have shown their outcry to this menace. Adagbabiri (2015) averred that it is doubtful whether Nigeria will ever realize the dreams of allowing democratic principles to influence the country’s political life, giving to the way things are moving in contemporary Nigeria. Nigeria’s 20 years democracy has become nothing more or less than wasteful political periods, without any meaningful achievements rather than steady dwarfing of democratic tenets. Human rights abuse therefore abounds in Nigerian, thereby contradicting the good principles of democracy. In their study, Idada & Uhunmwuangho (2012) submitted that Nigeria had been in a democratic wobbling and has remained merely, a civilian government and not a true democratic government. He further maintained that Nigerian political leaders have selfish agenda in contrary to the aspirations and expectations of the people, hence they leave in affluence while the masses suffer in misery and abject poverty.

Human Rights
The ontological essence of man demonstrates that he is a being with values which is intrinsic in his dignity and inalienable human rights (Ofoegbu, 2013). This advocates that human beings are valuable only in the realm of their fundamental freedom. Human rights in the original sense are those natural rights that are bestowed to every human being by the virtue of their existence. The concept of human rights is beyond a mere definition, but rather understood by providing intelligent explanations of the concept. Attempts to provide befitting explanations to the concept of human rights have generated controversies among different scholars, because of its complexity. Despite this, different scholars have given explication of the concept from their distinct points of view. Human beings have certain rights simply by virtue of existing as human, and these rights are necessary condition for the life of humans (Ake, 1987). He upheld that people are entitled to these rights and indeed, to claim them and society are expected to allow them, otherwise the quality of life is compromised. By this assertion human rights add value to human existence, hence violability in human rights will do nothing than to draw man backwards to his original state of nature which Hobbes, Machiavelli and other social contract theorists accounted to be brutish, nasty and solitary. In fact, man’s life in the state of nature was presented with a very gloomy picture as it was worthless, meaningless and very short, all because there were no human rights laws.

Human rights are seen to be unique because of their universality and inviolability. Human rights are universal in the sense that they are the same and enjoyed by all humans everywhere and on the other hand inviolable as no one has the right to violate or infringe on other persons rights, even governments. Human rights as it is inviolable enables for individual right to protect his basic rights is a state of uncomfortable and unbearable violations. Human rights from the revolutionary points of view include the right to rebel against exploitation or domination and to take up arms in such a rebellion (Tokyo, as cited in Coker & Obo, 2012). It is deduced from the above explanation that right for self-determination in a situation of maltreatment is as a matter of fact, part of human rights.

Prior to this contemporary period, human rights have been asserted in some documents, some of these documents include:

1. The Magna Carta, 1215;
2. The Petition of Rights, 1682;
3. The English Bill of Rights, 1689;
4. The Virginia Declaration of Rights, 1776;
5. The American Declaration of Independence, 1776;
6. The French Declaration on the Rights of Man and Citizens, 1789,
7. The United States Constitution and Bill of Rights, 1791;
8. The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948);

However, the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UNUDHR) of 1948 (as was adopted by Resolution 217 A of the General Assembly) serves as a contemporary universal human rights law that incorporated rights of women, children and all race; their political, economic, social and religious rights. The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human rights recognized the dignity of all human beings. Right to life, right to freedom of thought and expression, rights to peaceful assembly and association, social securities, rights to basic necessities of life, judicial rights, and rights to education, among others were declared. These attributes made the body of law, universal and must be adopted by all the sovereign member states of the United Nations, Nigeria inclusive. It is worthy of note that the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria was made in coherence with the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).

In Nigeria, the following civil, socio-economic and political rights are in its constitution of 1999, section 33-43 (as amended in 2011). They are: the right to life (s. 33); the right to dignity of the human person (s.34); the right to personal liberty (s. 35); the right to fair hearing (s. 36); the right to private and family life (s. 37); the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion (s. 38); the right to freedom of expression and the press (s. 39); the right to peaceful assembly and association (s. 40); the right to freedom of movement (s. 41); the right to freedom from discrimination (s. 42); right to acquire and own immovable property anywhere in Nigeria (s. 43) (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999). These provisions are in tandem with the provisions of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948. All Nigerian citizens are entitled to enjoy all these right, except in some certain special conditions where there are clauses.

It is disheartening that despite the acclaimed democracy in Nigeria, the adoption and ratification of universal human rights law (UDHR) and the Nigeria’s constitutional provision for human rights, human right still face enormous abuse. Scholars have tried to respond to this danger, explaining it from different angles, with most of them laying much emphasis on illiberal governance in the country. Concomitantly, Agbaenyi & Anekwe (2019) attributed the ugly situation of human rights abuse in Africa in general and Nigeria particularly to illiberal governance which has culminated into misuse of constitutional powers. He explained that illiberal governance has contributed to social misbehaviors among citizen who looks up to governments as a role model and this has adversely affected citizens that were embodiment of social values and also resulted to social decay and backwardness in political and socio-economic development. He finally submitted that political restructuring will be the only instrument for reconstructing and revitalizing the Nigerian political and socio-economic system.

The Nature of Human Rights Abuse in Nigeria’s Democracy

Nigerian democracy is that which has been visited with obviously healthy criticisms by scholars, religious leaders, Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) and foreign governments. Although they may have limited powers to fix democratic problems in Nigeria, the recommendations that usually go along with these criticisms, if applied, would greatly improve the system. The reason for these disapprovals is as a result of the colossal neglect of the democratic principles by successive regimes in Nigeria from 1999 till present. Governance in Nigeria has never recognized human rights and rule of law; neither has it ever given room for peoples’ participation in governance. Nigerian democracy, therefore, stands as a subject of ridicule. While some scholars attribute the excessive use of government power by political office holders and its attendant of human rights violation to the damage done to the Nigerian political infrastructure by the military, other scholars insisted that the problem of the country’s democracy is corruption and bad leadership.

Military rule in Nigeria fostered an authoritarian culture (till present) in the country which is inimical to the conditions necessary for a feasible democratic system of government. It laid threats such as
phenomenal rise of ethnic armies, gagging of press, suppressing of oppositions, curtailing of independence of the judiciary and harassment of workers and students of institutions to Nigerian democracy. The military left a legacy of turning the state to private property by the leaders (Mohammad & Liman 2018). Democratic erosion and bad governance had flushed down the legitimacy of the Nigerian state as a result of privatization of the state by leaders, and thereby killing the people’s aspiration for democracy and economic development (Nzongola-Ntalaja, 2002). There is a claim that the democratic principles and arrangements put in place by the military are usually faulty and inadequate for flexible democratic governance to flourish (Obioha, 2016). This is an attempt to clarify the fact that although, the military have made significant impacts in Nigerian transition to democracy and up till today continue to uphold the effort through their retired personnel, democratic principles cannot still be internalized in the country with the military fashioned framework.

Adenrele & Olubenga (2014) observed that corruption is the problem with the Nigerian democratic governance, insisting that corruption promotes criminal and extremist activity and create legitimate socio-political and economic barriers. All these together resulted to poor leadership which has failed to inculcate human rights protection in Nigerian democracy. In attendant to poor leadership as a problem of Nigerian democracy, Onigbude, as cited in Lawal and Owolabi (2012:7) observed as follows:

Regrettably, poor leadership performance has remained with us despite years of complaints and grumbling. We have acquiesced in our own progressive destruction by submitting ourselves to the leadership of political misfits. It is surprising that the so much expected dividends of democracy eluded the masses, while leadership has remained uncountable to them.

Adenrele & Olugbenga (2014) argued that human rights abuse in Nigeria is cancerous since individuals, groups and governments are part of it. He further stated that the ill act of human rights abuse has held the country back over the years, and suggested for a collective effort in order to combat it. More emphatically, human rights violation in Nigerian democracy is perpetrated by the government; terrorist groups like Boko Haram, Herdsmen and Niger-Delta Militants; security agencies like the police, DSS, military and Joint Civilian Task Force (JCTF). Human rights abuse in Nigerian democracy come in the form of unlawful arrest and detention, extrajudicial killing, intimidation of political opponents, disobedience of court order and so on. Nonetheless, the government has greatly contributed to this ugly situation of human rights abuse, through what they do and what they fail to do. Human rights abuse in Nigerian democracy has suppressed the citizens and devalued the nation’s cherished value (Nnochiri, 2013). What this entails is that, in a country where human rights are denied, peoples’ values will diminish and their quality, performance and supports are forced to terminate.

The Nigerian government officials, despite the glaring violations of human rights, poverty, hunger and other problems in the democratic process, still give reason for their failure (Bello-Imam & Obadan, as cited in Idada and Uahunmwangho, 2012). The statement made by former President Olusegun Obasanjo, as was x-rayed by Igomu (2015:2) further clarified the point. He stressed as follows:

Democracy, as concurred in the west, may suit circumstances and needs. As such, our conceptualization of democracy must take due cognizance of our lived reality and whatever structure and instructions that would sustain democratic practice must reflect the peculiarities of our Nigerian environment.

This statement purely indicates that Nigerian democracy is in trouble, as leaders give reason for their failure to internalize its principles in Nigerian governance. Hence, human rights are violated in the country and political leaders give excuses and shift the blame on environmental and socio-cultural factors.

Although human rights violation is believed to have cut across all domains of human existence, Nigeria security service has been believed to be one of the greatest human rights violator (Nzarga, 2014). Human rights violations in Nigeria by the Nigerian security force have been understood to derive momentum from the government. The government through its security apparatus intimidates oppositions as a result of their non-tolerance. The siege on the national assembly on August, 2018 by the Department Security Service
(DSS) was discovered to have ensued from the government’s order. This is in line with the statement provided by some lawmakers like Senator Dino Malaye and Senator Ibrahim Rufiu over the issue. According to them the operation was carried out in order to offer support to All Progressive People’s Congress’ effort to impeach the Senate President and his vice who happened to come from the opposition party, Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) (Jimoh, Abuh, Daka, Opara and Ehiaghe, 2018). The killing, harassment and detention of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), a peaceful self-determination group in the South Eastern Nigeria by the military had the approval of the Nigerian Government. Transparency International (T1) reported that between August 2015 and October 2016, the security force killed more than 150 IPOB members and supports during non-violent gatherings (Amnesty International [AI], 2018).

Boko Haram, Fulani Herdsmen, Niger Delta militants have continued to worsen the case of human rights abuse in the country. These groups kill and brutalize Nigerian citizens routinely, with some of them making very complicating and silly demands, subjecting human life to a total horror. Most disgustingly, the Nigerian governments have been unable to curb or rather stop the activities of these groups. Attempts made to curtail the activities of these groups had overtime been miscalculated and they yield futile results, with some resulting to additional human rights violation by the security operatives. Hence, the Nigerian leaders were busy trading on the wellbeing of the people, amassing wealth and living a quality life, while citizens die in abject poverty and misery. In a nutshell, Nigerian government has been the major cause of human rights violations in the country because of its inability to implement democratic principles that could allow for human rights protection.

**Instances and Forms of Human Rights Violations in Nigerian Democracy**

Democracy in an ideal term is a practice of equality, classlessness, impartiality and consensus. Its very nature qualified it as a method that ensures human rights protection whenever its principles are demonstrated in any society. No system of government, as emphatically stressed in literatures guarantees human rights more than democracy. In Nigeria, the case is different, as democratic principles are quarantined and never enforced, despite its long stay in the system. However, the violation of human rights that was obtained during the military dictatorship still never declined (Ozoigbo, 2017). The Nigeria’s twenty (20) years of uninterrupted democratic regimes have nothing to show for. Immense human rights abuse has continued to contradict the democratic principles which the country preaches. Political and economic development is in continuous retardation and depreciation, as the people’s values are reduced on a daily basis with one human rights violation or the other. According to United State Department of State (2005), Nigerian government human rights record remained poor, as they continue to commit serious abuses. This section of the paper highlights instances and forms of human rights violations in Nigerian democracy from 1999 till date.

**Odi Massacre**

There was a mass killing in Odi, bayelsa State in what is tagged ‘Odi Massacre’ in a clash between the military and the inhabitants of the area during their agitation against the way the federal government was going about exploration of oil, which has resulted in hazardous pollution of the area. Soldiers who massacred more than 200 people in Benue State in 2001, and soldiers involved in the complete destruction of Odi, Bayelsa State in 1999 which resulted to about 2, 500 deaths, was not prosecuted by Obasanjo’s Government (Human Rights Watch, 2013). In September, 2016, Nigerian soldiers in their attempt to arrest militants in the Niger-Delta area destroyed 43 houses and other properties in Peremabiri, Akamabugo and Tikogbene communities of Bayelsa State.

**Forced and Unlawful Eviction**

Between 2015 and 2017, about 40, 000 poor urban dwellers were forcibly evicted from some towns in Lagos state by the state authorities. The evictions in some instances were against the court order, as such, unlawful (AI, 2018). See table below:
Table I

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Affected Communities</th>
<th>Total Residence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>OtundoGbame and Ilubrin communities</td>
<td>5,000 and 2 shot dead by the police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>OtundoGbame waterfront and Ikat</td>
<td>30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Badia-East community</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10,200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Source: Amnesty International (2018)

Restriction of Right to Self-Determination

In Nigerian democracy, right to self-determination has been greatly abused. Most apparently is the agitation for freedom of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) in the South-Easters part of the country. The Nigerian security force have killed, harassed and detained members of this group in the order of the federal government. The military that was deployed to the Southeastern Nigeria since 2015 to stop the non-violent activities of the IPOB killed more than 160 people between 2015 and 2017 (Amnesty International, 2018). The source provided that the federal government in 2017 banned IPOB.

Rejection of Court Order

Rejection of court order by the Nigerian government has rendered human rights in Nigeria useless, handicap the judiciary, surmounted democracy and culminated in illiberal governance. The case of Ibrahim El-Zakzaky, the leader of the Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN) whom the federal government refused to grant him bail since 2015 as ordered by the court was a good example (Adesumoju, Olaleye & Ramon, 2018). Amnesty International (2018) reported that between 12 and 14 December 2015, more than 350 IMN members were killed by the Kaduna State soldiers. Just recently a Nigerian Youth Service Coup (NYSC) member identified as Precious Owolabi, serving with Channels TV was shot during the clash between the Nigerian Police Force and the IMN/Shiites members during the protest for the release of their leader, Ibrahim El-Zakzaky (Ibeh, 2019).

The case of Sambo Dasuki (Rtd) was also another typical example where the federal government refuted court order. Sambo Dansuki, a former National Security Adviser, was arrested on December 2015 for misappropriation of the sum of $2.1 billion intended to purchase military equipment for the fight against Boko Haram. After his trial, he was granted bail by the court but the federal Government under President Mohammadu Buhari refused to grant him bail for six times (Ojo, 2018). From the same source, the Nigerian government has also refuted the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) judgment ordering the Nigerian authorities to provide free and quality education to all Nigerian children without discrimination and the ruling by the Nigerian court ordering the authorities to establish education banks to assist poor student to obtain loan to pursue tertiary education and restoration of People’s Bank to give loans without collateral to less privilege citizens.

Armed Conflict

Armed conflicts in the country constitute human rights violations, through the activities of Boko Haram, Fulani Herdsmen and the Nigerian military. According to Amnesty International (2018), Boko Haram since 2014 has committed war crimes and crimes against humanity, killing at least 9,000 civilians, abducting thousands of women and girls and destroying towns and villages. The military have also according to the source committed crimes under international law in their response to Boko Haram, through arrests, unlawful detention and killing of suspected Boko Haram members. For instance in 2015,
the military arrested tortured and detained at least 20,000 people, mostly young boys suspected to be Boko Haram Members. Between 2015 and 2017, Hundreds of Women have been detained without adequate investigation, with no access to their families, their lawyers or to court. Most irritating, in January 2017, the Nigerian Air Force bombed the Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camp in Rann, Borno State, killing at least 167 civilians, including many children. The military had explained this ugly incidence as a mere mistake (AI, 2018). According to Human Right Watch (2019), the activities of Boko Haram persisted in Nigeria in 2018, at least 1, 200 people died and nearly 200,000 were displaced in the northeast Nigeria. The menace of the Fulani Herdsmen in some states in the North Central and Eastern Nigeria resulted into a death toll of hundreds of people since 2015. Now let us take a look at the table below: 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Areas/States Attacked</th>
<th>Death</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>Adamawa, Benue, Kaduna, Ondo, Taraba and Benue</td>
<td>At least 168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>Agatu, Benue State</td>
<td>At least 45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Taraba, Enugu and Benue State</td>
<td>605</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Jos</td>
<td>22</td>
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Table: The Author

War against Human Rights Defenders, Media and Non-Governmental Organization

Human rights defenders, media reporters and Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Nigeria face serious risk both from the anti-human rights groups and from the government itself. Bill HB 585, which has passed two readings in the Nigerian House of Representatives, would establish a regulatory commission to oversee non-governmental organizations in Nigeria. There is no gain saying the fact that this Bill if passed into law will only succeed in restricting and curtailing the activities of the NGOs. The Cyber Crime act that was voted law in May 2015 was to check the activities of bloggers who may wish to criticize lay hate speeches on the government (International Service for Human Rights, 2018). Still from the same source, Chike Obi, a human rights advocate was kidnapped on 1 June, 2017, after he previously reported being threatened on the basis of his identity and LGBT-themed writing. In July 2009, soldiers arrested and killed Yusuf, a credible media reporter, whose bruised body was subsequently seen at the state police headquarters with multiple bullet wounds. The then president Yar’Adua promised to conduct a full investigation about Yusuf’s death, but unfortunately, authorities had not publicly released the result of the investigation (U.S. Department of State, 2011).

Flawed/Violent Elections

Election flaws, political and electoral violence ignited by politicians, opposition political parties, thugs and scalawags, have kept electoral process in Nigeria in a chaos since 1999. Nigeria’s general election of 2003 which reelected former President Olusegun Obasanjo to a 4-years second tenure was on December 2003 voided by the court, claiming that there was significant rigging in the entire Ogun State, even though by a 3-1 vote, the claim was declined to overturn the election (United States Department of State, 2005). Human Rights Watch (2007) revealed that during the April 2007 election, minimum of 300 Nigerians were killed, a death record which is higher than the report figure (100) from the 2003 general election violence. Despite the high volume of fairness recorded during the 2011 general election in Nigeria, violence that occurred during the process still claimed hundreds of lives. Human Rights Watch estimated that 800 people were killed and 65,000 people displaced due to post election violence and rioting among rivals (Le Van & Ukata, 2012). Government influence on election has rendered electoral process useless in Nigerian democracy. This was the case in the last Ekiti State governorship election when the People Democratic Party (PDP) candidate claimed that All Progressive Congress (APC) used federal might to rig the election in the favour of their candidates (Oluwole, 2018).
Executive Influence on the Judiciary
Judicial independence in Nigeria has been vastly curtailed. The executive plays a vital role in appointments in the judicial arm. Judges are influence by the executive with gifts, especially in the state level. State courts therefore remains vulnerable to political pressures, hence rule of law becomes the things of the past. According to LeVan and Ukata(2012) state judiciaries usually bend to political pressures as state governors offer inducements, such as purchasing new cars for state judges, in the hope of receiving favorable judgment in exchange.

Conclusion/Findings
There is no gain saying the fact that Nigerian democracy since 1999 till date has not lived up to expectation. This is because of intense human rights violations in the country which the government has been found to be responsible for, directly and indirectly. The government directly violates human rights by using its machineries and security personnel to extra judicially kill, detain and torture innocent citizens without properly following the due process of law or any judicial procedures and equally direct refusal of court orders. Indirectly, the government caused human rights violations through ignoring the basic principles of democracy, which has resulted to illiberal governance and led to people taken up arms to fight for their rights. As a general saying goes, a hungry man is an angry man, hence, poverty, lack of quality education, lack of health care facilities, lack of good and accessible roads and general low standard of living amounted to ungovernable Nigerian society. Accordingly, TI had noted that over the years, the Nigerian authorities have announced a number of investigations into allegations of human rights violations; however, none of the reports have been made public. This entails that obviously, the Nigerian governments have done nothing sufficient to surmount the vices of human rights abuse in its democracy.

For the foregoing, the paper found out that the syndrome inflicted on the Nigerian political system by the military dictatorship internalized and eats deep in the fabrics of Nigerian governance. Secondly, corruption of the elite class is a major challenge in the Nigerian political system as it has greatly marred electoral processes in Nigerian democracy, to the detriment of human rights. Thirdly, Nigeria has no respect for the constitution; hence human rights provisions have been neglected. Finally, foreign governments’ responses to human rights abuse had always stopped in words, whence there is a serious need for action.

Recommendations
The study after all interrogations, therefore, recommended that:

- There is a great need for political restructuring in Nigeria in order to refit the system and flush away the bad eggs among the elites class.
- There is a need to revisit the electoral act and the Nigerian constitution in order to disallow military retired officers from contesting for political posts at all levels in Nigeria.
- The implementation of human rights laws (Nigerian constitutional provisions for human rights and the UDHR) need to be put at the forefront of leadership targets in Nigeria.
- Foreign governments should back-up their words with actions in order to salvage Nigeria from the kwashiorokor of human rights abuse and undemocratic governance.
References


