

THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL STUDIES

The Impact of Corporate International Human Rights Regime on the Human Rights Records of Sovereign States: The Case of Nigeria

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Abstract:

This paper examined the impact of corporate international human rights regime on Nigeria's human rights record. The core objectives of the paper are to find out if Nigerian government adhered substantially to the core international human rights treaties since 1999; to determine if the enforcement mechanism adopted by the human rights regime impacted positively on Nigeria's compliance to its principles, and to find out the primary factors that guarantee the prevailing relationship between Nigeria and the human rights regime. Secondary method of data collection and content analysis were adopted, while the theory of liberal institutionalism organised the inquiry. The results of analysis show that Nigeria violates human rights doctrines with impunity, and there is little or no sanction against Nigeria due to the violations since 1999. The prevailing World power rivalry and interests for the control of Nigeria's abundant oil and natural resources, and the emergence of boko-haram terrorist group are the primary factors responsible for the prevailing relationship between Nigeria and the human rights regime. The paper recommends for the establishment of a legally accepted international institution responsible for enforcing human rights.

Keywords: Human rights regime, World Powers, enforcement mechanism, sanction, compliance

1. Introduction

The European wars of attrition and the associated horrific/catastrophic human casualties laid the foundation for the emergence or evolution of international human rights regime in the 19th century. Civilians were the major victims of the war. This led the drafting of a series of codes of conduct for the treatment of civilians and war prisoners between 1864-1949. Prominent among these codes of conduct were the British Magna Carta, which limited the sovereign's powers of coercion; the France's Universal Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen; and the US Bill of Rights. These individual rules were codified into an international template that culminated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was signed on December 10, 1948 (Keith, 1999).

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 is based on an internationally accepted principle that human rights are "universal, indivisible, and interdependent". Hafner-Burton (2012) notes that this body of fundamental principles that apply universally to all states prohibits genocide, slavery, and torture. Accordingly, Cassel (2001:1) notes that international human rights laws;

- protect lives, free prisoners, rescue reputations, prompt legislative reform, and afford otherwise unattainable justice in the form of truth telling, reparations, and condemnation and punishment of rights violators. Still, direct international interventions are limited in impact.

Consequently, the acceptance of the universality of human rights principles by over 197 countries i.e. the globalisation of Human Rights creeds led to the emergence of a network of an expanding body of international laws (Cross, 1999), international institutions or corporate international governance that monitors and sanctions violators of the laws, international humanitarian intervention/assistance in sovereign socio-political activities, and a growing network of international human rights movements (Davenport, Moore, and Armstrong, 2008).

Although virtually all the states in the international system gave their ascent to the international human rights treaties and supplemental laws, many violate and resist the international human rights instruments and their obligations at different degrees, while others attach reservations and conditions to their acceptance of the regime. Some of these major human rights treaties or instruments and the number of countries that accented to them are presented in the table 1 below as follows:

Treaty	Year it opened	Rights	Parties
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)	1966	Life, Liberty, Freedom	166
International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)	1966	Economic, Social and social rights	160
International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD)	1966	Fundamental and Human Rights for Persons of All Races	173
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)	1980	Fundamental and Human Rights for Women	185
Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT)	1984	Freedom from Torture and Forms of Punishment	147
Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)	1989	Fundamental and Human Rights for Children	193

Table 1: Some of the Main International Human Rights Treaties

Source: Dutton, Yvonne M. (nd.). "Commitment to international human rights Treaties: the role of enforcement mechanisms." *U. Pa. J. Int'l L.*, Vol. 34(1), 4.

The violations and resistance to these instruments are attributed to two reasons. First, some world powers pursued their respective strategic national interests under the auspices of humanitarian intervention, defence of human rights, and the activities of international human rights institutions or organisations. This provokes resistance and violations of the auspices through which they spread their interests. Second, states' claim and pursuit of the principle of sovereignty in the international system i.e. states' claim to exclusive authority within their domain. Such countries criminalize the activities of human rights organisation, reject international human rights organisation reports, and ignore international demands and pressures against them. These factors tend to obstruct or hinder the effective operations of the international human rights regime.

This is further complicated by the absence of internationally acceptable enforcement machineries. None of the international treaties addressed it, no material inducements or rewards for improvements in human rights, while the UN can only do little by way of sanctions to punish deviants (Hafner-Burton 2005). However, Since 2002 the human rights regime have been enforced by the International Criminal Court (ICC), which is a permanent tribunal that prosecutes genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity committed by individuals and groups across the world. However, the court has being roundly accused of bias and being an instrument in the hands of western powers for actualizing their national interests.

Consequently, other similar courts exist at regional or continental levels such as European Court of Human Rights, Inter-American Court of Human Rights, Court of Justice of the Andean Community, Caribbean Court of Justice, African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, Special Tribunal for Lebanon, Special Court for Sierra Leone and Extraordinary Chambers in the Court of Cambodia, and Crimes Panels of the District Court of Dili (East Timor Tribunal). The existence of these courts alongside with ICC signifies the absence of internationally accepted enforcement agency or institution.

Thus, any country's compliance to international human rights law depends on many other factors other than the force of international law. These factors include moral outrage, economic collapse, economic development, democratization, political will, and domestic legal institutions (Cassel, 2001). Therefore, international human rights law is effective mainly when it interacts with rights in these related national processes. Consequently, coercion, persuasion, and acculturation have been the most specific mechanisms for influencing states' obligation in the international human rights regime (Davenport, 1995).

With a focus on Nigeria's relationship with the international human rights regime, this paper investigates the dominant approach used by the regime to elicit compliance from Nigerian government on human rights issues and the degree of success recorded by the approach. It intends also to find out the mitigating factor in the prevailing relationship between Nigeria and the regime.

Nigeria is a leading country in the West Africa sub-region and one of the dominant powers in Africa. It is a federated country with 36 states, a political capital in Abuja and economic capital in Lagos and has an official population of about 200 million. The population is characteristically made up of more than 250 ethnic groups that are geo-graphically delineated. Among them, Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba are dominant and jointly constitute approximately more than half of the population.

The relationship between these ethnic nationalities are conflict prone, phobic, prone to rivalry and wars, competition and struggle for hegemony (US Department of State, 2014). The struggle for power acquisition, control and consolidation among these ethnic groupings is the background of inhuman and illegal killings and violations of international human rights instruments. As a presidential system, the president is in charge of the executive arm and has enormous powers conferred on it by the constitution. The legislature is a bicameral one that is composed of the upper (the Senate) and lower (the federal House of representatives) houses. While the third organ, the Judiciary, interpretes the law. The leaders of the executive and the legislatures are elected by popular vote to a maximum of two four-year terms. In the dynamics of competing for these positions and consolidating victories lies the culture of unlawful killings in Nigeria.

1.1. Research Questions

In the face of the two divides, Nigeria have been accused severally by international human rights organisations of violating the rights of its citizens with impunity in their annual and bi-annual reports. This paper seeks to answer the following questions:

- Has Nigerian government adhered substantially to the core international human rights treaties since 1999?
- Has the enforcement mechanism adopted by the human rights regime impacted positively on Nigeria's compliance to its principles?
- What are the primary factors that guarantee the prevailing relationship between Nigeria and the human rights regime?

1.2. Significance of the Study

This study has both theoretical and empirical significance particularly for researchers and practitioners in the field of international governance, treaties, human rights and international law. Empirically, it exposes the major pitfalls and limitations associated with international human rights regime. This research shall re-awaken the consciousness among key stakeholders to embark the regime's reforms. In addition, the data provided by the study shall enable UNHCR to re-asses its approach to the rights posture of the Nigerian government.

Theoretically, this study provides the data on human rights practice in Nigeria, thereby enhancing comparative study of the phenomena with other countries of the world particularly Africa. In addition to this, the work shall provide data, which complements available literature, and also serve as a reference material to assist other researchers in related inquiries.

Scope and Limitations of the Study

The study and evaluation of Nigeria's compliance with core principles of international human rights treaties is the scope of this paper. Periodically, the study focuses on Nigeria's democratic experiences of 1999 to 2017. This period was chosen for the study because of the notoriety with which international human rights organisations are publishing harsh and critical reports concerning human rights abuse in Nigeria. Limited by security details from interviewing top political office holders and the military personnel, this paper adopts secondary method of inquiry in pursuit of answers to the questions raised above. This method is further limited by the difficulties associated with obtaining accurate information about human rights violations, which perpetrators commit under cover. However, the publications of international human rights organisations like Human Rights Watch serve as solutions.

2. Literature Review

The literature is replete with empirical verifications on the effectiveness of international human rights treaties and their ratifications in changing or altering the human rights practices or behaviours of many countries. Hafner-Burton (2012) observed that many countries deliberately refused to ratify and comply with every single UN human rights treaty, whereas, there is a growing number of countries that have ratified and adhere to most of treaties. For instance, over 100 countries have ratified the International Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, and submit to the jurisdiction and authority of the ICC (International Criminal Court, 2011). This is because they anticipate an ability and willingness to comply with them under most circumstances (Simmons, 2009).

The ratification of the International Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights depends on the basic socio-economic values prevailing in any country. Such values include democratic or autocratic values. Democracies easily ratify the UN treaties protecting civil and political rights and economic, social, and cultural rights more than nondemocratic governments (Cole, 2009; Simmons, 2009). Cassel (2001) notes that states that practice liberal democratic values and market economy with the propensity for regional unification achieve a high record of substantive outcomes and compliance with human rights treaties.

Helfer and Slaughter (1997), Davenport (2007), and Hathaway (2002) observe that democratic principles and practices propel states to comply with the human rights treaties they have ratified more than others. In democracies, mass mobilization against government repression (Davenport, Moore, and Armstrong 2008), judiciary and the rule of law (Goodwife and Hawkins, 2006; Powell and Staton, 2009), and people's withdraw of support to government (Vanberg, 2005) can and do alter state human rights behaviour.

Therefore, adherence to human rights regime is also a political strategy for power acquisition and consolidation. It is a strategic democratic alternative for soliciting citizen's support. Countries whose citizens are jittery or skeptical about human rights abuses, their governments tend to implement human rights principles and allow human rights organizations to regulate and monitor the treatment of citizens (Vreeland, 2008). Similarly, Hafner-Burton et al. (2011), Landman (2005), von Stein (2010), and Simmons and Danner (2010) argue that democratizing states join or adhere to human rights treaties more than others as a means of consolidating democratic institutions. Therefore, democracy is a very strong predictor of whether a state ratifies the international human rights regime or not.

Generally, scholars identify prevailing peace, strong rule of law and domestic judicial institutions (Chapman and Chaudoin, 2010), inducements (Hawkins, 2004), anticipated benefits such as international assistance, recognition, and aid from western democracies (Moravcsik, 2000), political Will to intervene in foreign civil wars (Neumayer, 2009), the desire by violent autocratic states to end the cycle of violence (Simmons and Danner, 2010), dependence network (Goodliffe and Hawkins, 2009; Goodliffe et al., 2012), and the desire to reduce the pressure for economic and political change from notable western countries (Hathaway 2002; Smith-Cannoy, 2012) as the factors responsible for states' ratification and adherence to international human rights regime.

Nevertheless, the ratification and acceptance of international human rights regime by sovereign countries does not translate into their compliance with the principles of regime (Hafner-Burton and Tsutsui, 2007; Goodliffe and Hawkins, 2006; Cole, 2005). Using a range of statistical tools, Simmons (2000) observed dual effects of human rights instruments on states' behaviours. Six of the human rights treaties agreements did not produce statistically significant changes in human rights practices, while seven of the these agreements did. Thus, Simmons concluded that human rights agreements have a positive effect on state behaviours, but that no evidence exist to prove that it applies in respect to human rights in all cases.

The dual impact nature of Simmons' study was replicated in other studies by different scholars. Studies conducted by Baumgartner (2011) and Gilligan and Nesbitt (2009) reveal that the ratification of international human rights treaties has no effect on a country's human rights practices, and in most cases those that ratify it have a higher level of its violations more than those that refuse to or that did not ratify them. This is because international human rights regimes are ineffective in eliminating repressive practices and changing states' domestic practices (Lebovic and Voeten, 2006). From this, the question of the effectiveness of international human rights doctrines, regime monitoring and enforcement of the doctrines, which is our focus, arose. The enforcement rules and structures are "woefully inadequate" (Hathaway 2002, p. 2008), and in many cases ineffective.

Keith (1999), Hathaway (2002), Smith-Cannoy (2012), von Stein (2010) among other scholars observe that the regime has no influence on states' behaviours. According to them, governments of many states increasingly resist human rights doctrines and institutions created for their protection because the principles of the regime challenge the interests of powerful groups, institutions and practices in those states (Ignatieff, 2001). The doctrines disrupt the actions of authoritarian governments, conservative religions, and primitive practices. The doctrines require governments to change laws, to hold violators accountable and punishable for their mischief, to reform or eliminate repressive institutions, to correct persisting violations of international human rights norms, to create agencies and introduce procedures to monitor compliance with international treaties.

In line with some of the observations of the negative impact school, Dada (2012) identified many factors that facilitate the negative relationship between Nigerian government and international human rights instruments i.e. Nigeria's violation of the regime. These factors as supported by other scholars include:

- Most of the international human rights treaties entered into by the Nigerian government were not enacted into law by the National Assembly, and were *ipso facto* not binding as stipulated by Section 12(1) 1999 Constitution as Amended.
- The rift over primacy between international human rights norms and domestic legislation created room for disregard to the instruments. The domestication of some of these instruments was done in a manner that contradicts or creates fundamental issues in their implementation. For instance, the 1999 Constitution draws a distinction between justiciable and non-justiciable human rights, while the human rights Charter makes no distinction between economic, social, and cultural rights (non-justified), on the one hand, and civil and political rights (justified) on the other. This is complicated by the international acceptance of the two (dualism) part of a universal legal order serving the needs of the human community (Harris, 1998; Agarwal, 2010).
- Reservation clauses in human rights instruments. The international human rights instruments are filled with ill-defined instances of permissible derogations (Obiagwu, 2003), i.e., "many of the human rights guaranteed in international human rights instruments are not sacrosanct or granted in absolute terms. Rather, the various instruments create instances where it is legitimate and legally sustainable for the rights to be violated." (Dada, 2012:8).
- Constitutional limitations and qualifications imposed on international human rights instruments promote its violation by the Nigerian government. Section 45(1) of the 1999 Constitution provides a veritable foundation for such violations.
- The experiences in military intervention and rule in Nigeria promote human rights violations by the government.
- Absence of true judicial independence, and
- The contending schisms in the character of its population further the violation of human rights. The religious divide i.e. Islam versus Christianity, ethnic tensions and rivalry, prevalence of insurgent and ethnic originated separatist groups, and authoritarian democratic transitions and ethnic politics, and struggles for true federalism and resources control all contribute to the persistence of human rights violations in Nigeria.

Contrary to the negative impact, many scholars argue and empirical studies like Landman (2005), Gilligan (2006), Kelley (2007), Simmons and Danner (2010), Helferand Voeten (2011), Neumayer (2005), and Smith and Romero (2011) reveal that international human rights regime exert positive impacts on states' behaviour. According to Simmons (2009), the positive relationship between the human rights instruments, ratification and state behaviour appears to be most pronounced among countries in transition from autocracy to liberal democracy. In addition to this, Conrad and Ritter (2011) and Cardenas (2007) among others argue that external pressures, leader vulnerability and the tensions that can rise from civil society mobilization and domestic litigation lead to the positive influence that international human rights instruments, and their ratification have on the behaviour of many countries.

Further, Finnemore and Sikkink (1998), Keck and Sikkink (1998), Koremenos (2007) and Hawkins (2004) argue that allied coercion or threat of coercive actions against any member of their alliance tending to violate human rights instruments enables compliance. That is, a sufficient number of states that adopt international treaties do form a kind of peer pressure and international condemnation that can coerce other states into implementing the treaties.

Thus, Lipson (1991) and Simmons (2000) suggest that fear of damage to a state's international reputation and identity influences them to adhere to or comply with the international human rights regime, particularly when they must have ratified the treaties. Non-compliance to the treaty results in a loss of credibility that negatively affects their diplomatic activities internationally (Keohane, 1984; Lipson, 1991; Simmons, 2000).

Hurd (1999) identified legitimacy as a prominent force in state's compliance with human rights regime. He argues that there is possibility of high level compliance when a norm of international law is perceived by the relevant actors as legitimate and/or fair process. This inherent propensity of states to comply on the basis of perceived procedural fairness is similar to Chayes and Chayes argument as noted by Baumgartner (2011: 452) that states;

- have an inherent propensity to comply with international norms and that noncompliance is largely due to (1) reasonable disagreements about the proper interpretation of ambiguous international law norms; (2) limitations on the capacity of states

to live up to their undertakings; and (3) temporal issues, such as uncontrollable social and economic changes and the long time it may take for a country to implement a new treaty obligation.

This argument does not apply to Nigeria. In spite of Nigeria's capabilities and efforts in laundering positive international image to reduce international costs of their human rights violation and pressure, which would have led to positive relationship with international human rights instruments, her poor human rights records persist. The reactions of Nigeria's international strategic partners to her recalcitrant anti-human right rights behaviours tend to support the situation.

History has proved that strategic partners in international politics ignore each other's poor human rights records as long as their national economic and security interests are safeguarded (Downes and Jones, 2002). International treaties and institutions exist only because powerful states benefit from their presence (Carr, 1946). They are complied with or monitored, or violators are sanctioned when they serve the interests of such powerful states. It is the powerful states that coerce less powerful states into accepting the treaties or laws and comply with them. Baumgartner (2011:447) summarised this thus:

-human rights norms will be enforced to the extent that it is in the strategic interest of powerful nations to enforce them. Unfortunately, powerful countries rarely give priority to human rights concerns in their foreign policy, thus leaving human rights regimes largely unenforced.

Even among many scholars from the partnering states, severe and institutionalized human rights abuses are ignored in their research (Hafner-Burton and Tsutsui, 2007).

These arguments tend to highlight the cause of the ineffectiveness of available enforcement mechanisms in the international system in defence of human rights. These mechanisms of enforcement of compliance include litigation and access to the domestic courts in states that accented to the instruments (Caldeira, and Holston, 1999); international monitoring, which Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have being part of organisations involved; international criminal court prosecution, international criminal tribunals, and private prosecution (Alter, 2006); activities of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights (Lebovic and Voeten, 2006); international, multilateral and bilateral sanctions (Alesina and David, 2000); etc.

Scholars such as Mitchell (1993) observe that the enforcement of human rights instruments by the international community is very costly, and in most cases misguided or misapplied in the process. These scholars, therefore, argue that the most appropriate method of eliciting compliance is the application of persuasion and provision of technical assistance where a country lacks the resources as a means of influencing perceived violators to live up to their commitments. This approach demands information sharing among actors on the process and developments in the process.

A summary of the literature reveals an extensive exploration of human rights instruments, compliances and violations, factors responsible for or that enhance compliance and violation, enforcement mechanisms available to the international community, and the limitations of those mechanisms. However, the literature fails to substantially account for the observed conflict relationship between the violation of international human rights instruments and the importance of international enforcement mechanisms. Consequently, this paper tries to fill this vacuum using Nigeria as case illustration.

3. Theoretical Framework

The paper adopts the theory of Institutional Liberalism or liberal institutionalism as its framework of analysis. This theory views the state as unitary rational agents. The primary proposition of this theory is that every state should be republican whose governments are representative democracies that rely on the consent of the citizens for their policies and actions (Kant, 1983; Anne-Marie, 1995). The core principle of liberal theory is that individuals have basic rights to free speech, fair treatment, equality before the law, and political equality enshrined in a political constitution (Kant, 1991).

These human rights are an extension of natural and inalienable rights of individuals within any state with global application. Individuals have equal moral worth, and any abuse of rights in one part of the world is 'felt everywhere' (Kant, 1991). Therefore, in accord with liberal principles, the promotion of human rights is inextricably linked to the promotion of democracy and good governance. The human rights practices are intertwined with democratic practices and governance (Laurence and Anne-Marie, 1997). The international propagators of human rights focus on promoting democratization and domestic protection of human rights, sanctioning, shaming and co-optation as their instruments of influence. These instruments make the citizens of the target country to influence their government, thereby causing a shift in the domestic political balance of power in favour of greater protection for human rights, and in pursuit of their economic wellbeing (McElroy, 1992).

Therefore, this theory enables the paper to study the impact of international treaties, resolutions, interventions, and sanctions on activism, political competition, governance, opposition, and government's respect for human rights in the midst of the contest for state power in Nigeria's democratic experience since 1999.

4. Methodological Construct

This paper consulted available and appropriate research reports and publications in public and private libraries, newspapers and magazines together with available materials in the cyberspace – the internet. Other sources of data include conference and seminar papers, government publications and gazettes, international human rights organisation's reports etc. The method adopted therein is to search for these publications, read and digest their contents, extrapolate their findings and use them as data. Content analysis was adopted in analysing the data.

5. Data Gathering and Analysis

Although Nigeria subscribed to major international human rights instruments or laws, the country has continued to violate them with impunity. These major international human rights instruments include the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948; the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966 (ICCPR); The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966 (ICESCR); and other regional human rights instruments. Their violations occur in the context of weak rule of law and an intricate legal system, impunity of security forces, denial of people's freedoms, the internal fight against separatist and insurgent groups the Boko Haram insurgency and Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), and discriminatory social practices.

Collaborating Francis, LaPin, and Rossiasco (2011), and Afeno (2012), Afeno (2014: 4-5) summarizes the international human rights violations in Nigeria by the security agencies in the following words:

- Over the years, various Joint Security Task Forces (JTFs) have been created and deployed for internal security duties as a result of the inability of the police to effectively combat the rising wave of organised crime, militancy, and insurgency in the country. 5 Members of these task forces, who are usually drawn from the Nigerian army, navy, air force, police, state security services (SSS), Department of State Security (DSS), and immigration and customs officials, often act like occupying forces against the civilian population, killing people arbitrarily. The security forces rarely adhere to legally mandated rules of engagement, and they are known to use excessive force to arrest, detain, and kill anyone who happens to be at the wrong place at the wrong time.

Pearce, McGee, and Wheeler (2011) and Hill (2012) observed that these security forces are organised, funded, and managed to protect individual politicians or the politically influential individuals in the country and the bourgeoisies using state procured and controlled apparatus of violence. This has resulted in widespread killings of unarmed civilians by the security forces with impunity.

The intervention of the security forces causes more deaths because have a tendency to kill rather than arrest and prosecute criminal suspects. Between 2006 and 2014, for instance, the security forces killed in 2,043 incidents, resulting in 12,078 fatalities (Hill, 2012; Afeno, 2014; Serrano and Zacharias, 2014). Afeno(2014:17-18) added, "Besides political and religious groups, the intervention of the army in violent conflicts involving communities within the same period resulted in 1,572 fatalities....between June 2006 and May 2014, fatal incidents where the police intervened resulted in 1,332 fatalities when they involved political groups, 877 fatalities when they involved communities, and 612 fatalities when they involved trade unions."The details of some of these inhuman killings are presented in table 1 below.

s/n	Date	Place	Nature of violation	Sources
1	20/11/ 1999	Odi, Bayelsa State	Massacre of 2,500 defenceless and unarmed civilians by the military	Nzarga(2014)
2	26/10/2001	Benue state	Massacre of 100 defenceless and unarmed men by the military	Nzarga (2014)
3	2007	Gwagwalada, Abuja	a-Mobile Policeman raped a three year' old girl	Nzarga (2014)
4	25/2/2008	Okene, Kogi State	Police Massacre of 50 defenceless civilians	Adenrele and Olugbenga (2014)
5	2009	Niger Delta	20,000 civilians massacred and 50,000 displaced by the Joint Military Task Force (JTF) operation	Ero (2009)
6	24/4/ 2010	Lagos	Many journalists like Ed-Ugbagwu, Godwin Abgroko, Abayomi Ogundeji, Omololu Falobi, and Boyo Ohu were brutally killed	Nzarga (2014)
7	22/12/2010	Warri-Sapele	a-Mobile Policeman killed Wilfred Egogo at police check-point	Nzarga (2014)
8	17-27/4/2011	Kaduna	135 civilians killed by Police during protest	Akhaine and Chizea (2011)
9	9/10/2012	Maiduguri, Borno state	JTF killed 20 to 45 civilians and razed 50 to 100 houses	HRW, 2012
10	2/11/2012	Maiduguri, Borno state	JTF killed up to 40 unarmed civilians	HRW, 2012
11	3/12/2012	Wuse Zone 2, Abuja	Rape, extortion, and assault against some women by security agents. The Nigerian Army dismissed the officers	Nzarga (2014)
12	25/4/2013	Abuja	Police tortured Lawal Ganiyu into unconscious and subsequent loss of memory for allegation of fraud	Nzarga (2014)
13	April, 2013	Baga, Borno State	400 people, mostly civilians were killed	Adenrele and Olugbenga (2014)
14	20-21/11/2013		Unlawful and continued detention of 182 election observers by the police	Adebayo, 2013; Ezigbo, 2013

Table 2: Nigeria's basic human rights violation since May 29, 1999

Sources: Review of literature

Zamfir (2016:2) summarised other atrocities perpetrated by Nigeria government up to 2016 according to Amnesty International reports in the following words:

- Amnesty International has collected evidence of more than 1 200 extrajudicial executions, the arbitrary arrest of least 20 000 people, countless acts of torture, and hundreds of enforced disappearances; allegedly, since March 2011, more than 7 000 men and boys have died in detention, due to starvation and thirst, severely overcrowded cells, torture and a complete lack of medical attention. Many of those arrested have been held in indefinite military detention and only a small number have appeared before the courts.

Other violations include also extra-judicial killings, illegal detention, and destruction of property by security forces (McCulley, 2013; Ojo *et al.*, 2014); motorists' harassment and extortion by security personnel, political assassinations, and intimidation of political opponents (Akhaine and Chizea, 2011); rapes and child abuse (Hamzat, 2013; Salahudeen, 2013). In addition, international human rights groups recorded that detainees awaiting trial constituted 72 percent of the Nigeria prison population, with some awaiting trial more than 10 years. Ugochukwu (2014:2) notes that,

- Evidence from several local and international reports on the human rights situation in Nigeria indicate continuing human rights violations under a democratic constitution in which human rights guarantees (contained in the Constitution itself and international agreements that Nigeria signed into) are prominently prioritized, at least on paper.

These evidences are sacrosanct and make the inference that Nigeria government has not adhered substantially to the core international human rights treaties since 1999 highly innocuous. In the light of these evidences, the paper investigated further the influence or impact of international human rights regime enforcement mechanism on Nigeria's behaviour.

As noted in the literature, the regime has no standing enforcement structure or institution of its own in spite of the existence of the International Criminal Court (ICC). The court handles such extreme cases of human rights violations such as genocide and not cases of detention without trial etc. Therefore, the enforcement of international human rights regimes lies with Western powers and propagators of liberal world order. These powers have in most cases adopted coercion and persuasion as the regimes' enforcement mechanism.

In all, the UN, EU, and US (with their allies) employ the instrument of sanction to promote human rights doctrines across the world. They impose restrictive measures against human rights violations in the many countries such Nigeria. The goal of these multilateral and unilateral sanctions is to coerce and constrain such countries with the aim of changing their behaviour, and to send a political signal. These sanction are only effective at meeting their aims when they have clear objectives; are intertwined with other foreign-policy instruments/actions; are supported by regional and global powers; and are properly enforced and monitored.

It is very pertinent to observe that Nigeria incurred the wraths of these countries and institutions prior to Nigeria's return to democratic rule in 1999. One may argue here that that period was marked by military autocracy and repression. From 1999, they turned blind eyes to Nigeria's anti-human rights behaviours in spite of Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International well documented reports of such abuses or violations.

The only attempt at enforcing international human rights regime was that of United States' sanction and/or imposition of ban on sale of arms to Nigeria. According to the United States (2004:191) policy against Nigeria's human rights violations:

- None of the funds appropriated under the headings "International Military Education and Training" and "Foreign Military Financing Program" may be made available for assistance for Nigeria until the President certifies to the Committees on Appropriations that the Nigerian Minister of Defense, the Chief of the Army Staff, and the Minister of State for Defense/Army are suspending from the Armed Forces those members, of whatever rank, against whom there is credible evidence of gross violations of human rights in Benue State in October 2001, and the Government of Nigeria and the Nigerian Armed Forces are taking effective measures to bring such individuals to justice: Provided, That the President may waive such prohibition if he determines that doing so is in the national security interest of the United States: Provided further, That prior to exercising such waiver authority, the President shall submit a report to the Committees on Appropriations describing the involvement of the Nigerian Armed Forces in the incident in Benue State, the measures that are being taken to bring such individuals to justice, and whether any Nigerian Armed Forces units involved with the incident in Benue State are receiving United States assistance.

Further attempt to punish Nigeria was taken in 2016 when the US government imposed arms embargo against President Muhammadu Buhari's regime for disobedience to Court Orders and various Human rights Violations. However, the ban was short-lived because of two important developments. First, Nigeria turned to Russia and China through South Africa for the supply of military hardwares and weapons. These countries are major US rivalry and competitors for international dominance. Secondly, the massive and successful Boko Haram operation such as the abduction of hundreds of Chibokschool girls, suicide bombings that claimed hundreds of lives, etc drew considerable international attention. In addition to being blacklisted by US government for its alleged link to international terrorist groups waging war against American interests in the Middle East, the calamities caused by the sect's activities drew US citizens to call for their government's prompt response.

Consequently, through diplomacy, the US reversed the embargo, began to send military experts to train Nigerian soldiers on how to combat the boko-haram terrorist organisation. They equally sold military hard wares and jet fighters to the same Buhari's government. In addition, the US government has offered different types of assistance to the same Nigerian governments being accused of human rights violations. Such assistance between 2003 and 2008 is presented in table 2 below as follows:

Programme	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Development Assistance	23.3	13.6	14.8	12.5	24	31.4
Child survival & Health programme Fund	47.9	42.5	28.2	21.5	32.4	31.3
Economic Support Fund	3.8	4.9	4.9	4.9	6.5	Nil
Foreign Military Financing	Nil	Nil	Nil	0.99	1	1.35
International military Education & Training	Nil	Nil	85.9	138.6	246.9	467.5
Internet Narcotics control & Law Enforcement	Nil	Nil	2.2	0.99	0.4	1.2
Global HIV/AIDS Initiatives	Nil	Nil	Nil	0.79	0.69	0.8
Total	75.1	61.1	136.2	180.354	313.815	533.55

Table 3a: US Assistance to Nigeria (in \$ millions, fiscal year)

Source: Adams (December 2014: 26).

Table 1. State Department and USAID Assistance to Nigeria			
(\$ in thousands)	FY2010 Actual	FY2011 Actual	FY2012 Request
Development Assistance	70,967	55,791	70,276
Foreign Military Financing	1,850	1,212	1,000
Global Health and Child Survival - State	471,227	471,227	471,227
Global Health and Child Survival - USAID	69,100	101,971	117,000
International Military Education and Training	1,016	940	950
International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement	500	1,250	0
Nonproliferation, Antiterrorism, Demining and Related Programs	1,520	0	0
TOTAL	616,180	632,391	660,453

Source: State Department Congressional Budget Justifications for Foreign Operations.

Table 3b: US Assistance to Nigeria (in \$ millions, fiscal year)

Source: Adapted from Adams (December 2014: 28)

US policy against Nigeria for human rights violations is therefore an odd mix of applauding and condemning and tends to encourage Nigeria's disregard for the human rights instruments.

Interrogating the primary factors that guarantee the prevailing relationship between Nigeria and the human rights regime or enforcers of human rights instruments such as the Britain, the United States and others, the followings were revealed:

- The rivalry and competition between the World Powers such the US, Russia, and China for the control of Africa and oil rich Nigeria, and the efforts by Britain to maintain her neo-colonial influence ensured Nigeria's prevailing relation with international human rights regime (see Ignatieff, 2004). Nigeria's population, natural resources, and influence in regional and sub-regional organisations in Africa and international trade made her a 'beautiful bride' in spite of human rights abuses.
- The contemporary waive of international terrorist activities, the emergence of boko-haram and its alleged link to strong Middle East terrorist groups that pose direct threat to the national security interests of the US, Britain, Israel, and their European allies weakened the force of international human rights regime against Nigeria. Nigeria became a useful front for Western war against international terrorism.

Therefore, the preferences of the West and their international allies, and Nigeria's refusal to allow international human rights organisation monitoring of her human rights practices underplays human rights regime enforcement against Nigeria as a state (see Foot, 2000; Donnelly, 2003; 2007).

6. Conclusion

The reality is that Nigeria is an ardent violator of international human rights regime both during the military and democratic regimes. The period, 1999 to 2016 is not an exception. However, contrary to international pressures and sanctions against Nigeria before 1999, the various Western powers and international institutions spear heading such sanctions remained indifference to human rights violation since 1999. The United States was the only country that made attempts to impose sanction on sale of arms but it was short-lived.

This paper observes that conflict of interests and struggle for the control of Nigeria's abundant oil and natural resources together with the emergence of boko-haram terrorist group, which is alleged to have links with Middle East terrorist groups are the major factors that undermine the enforcement of human rights regime. The paper hereby recommends for the establishment of formal international institution that is legally empowered to sanction all forms of human rights violations.

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