

CITIZEN DIPLOMACY AND THE PLIGHT OF NIGERIANS BOTH AT HOME AND ABROAD

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Abstract

Section 14(2) (b) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended) stipulates that the paramount objective of the state is the security and wellbeing of the populace. The security and welfare of the populace are collectively articulated as a single objective, albeit including two interconnected components. The state's failure in this attempt renders it a failed state, since all other objectives rely on the successful realisation of this core aim. Citizen diplomacy is one of the diplomatic initiatives aimed at accomplishing this objective. This paper investigates the fundamental aims of citizen diplomacy as a key component of Nigeria's foreign policy and assesses the degree to which these objectives have been realised. The theoretical elucidation of the discourse is Political Realism. The theory's utility in the study lies in its assertion that, although realism predominantly emphasises state-centric interactions and power dynamics, it provides insights into citizen diplomacy by positing that states employ citizen diplomacy to further their national interests through alliance formation, economic promotion, or countering adverse perceptions. The study's findings indicated that Nigeria's foreign policy focus on citizen diplomacy has not produced the anticipated benefits owing to various local and international variables. The general governmental climate in Nigeria fails to intentionally foster support and encourages its people, since major topics of concern are inadequately handled. The reports advised that Nigeria should engage in capacity development, enhance institutional frameworks, and prioritise the safety and well-being of its population domestically and internationally to fully use the potential of citizen diplomacy.

Keywords: Citizen Diplomacy, Citizen-centric, Diplomatic Missions, Diaspora, Foreign Policy Thrust, National Interest, Xenophobic Attack.

I. Introduction

The term "citizen diplomacy" may also mean "people-to-people diplomacy," and it describes instances in which ordinary people work to improve international relations and foster unity among states. It differs from the conventional kind of diplomacy, which is usually carried out by representatives of the state. One of its foreign policy tenets is the idea that ordinary people should have a say in how their government handles international relations. It acknowledges the importance of people's roles in advancing national interests, increasing international understanding, and improving a country's reputation, whether they are at home or abroad. It suggests that nation-states make an attempt to rally their populace behind their foreign policy and eventually send them out to fight for it. The whole population of a nation is mobilised to carry out her foreign policy objectives in this way. An atmosphere where every person, at home and abroad, views himself as a symbol of his country's foreign policy is what it means, according to Saliu (2016). It lays down the ground rules for protecting people's rights no matter where they are and states that a nation's actions abroad must serve the welfare of its residents. By including Nigerians in the formulation and implementation of Nigeria's foreign policy, the state is demonstrating its obligation towards its people. The foreign policy focus of citizen diplomacy in Nigeria was influenced by several reasons. To achieve the Millennium Development Goals for Africa, the Yar'Adua government first used this idea, which means that Nigeria's foreign policy would henceforth focus on constructive economic and political involvement. The fundamental driving force was a desire to guarantee the safety and welfare of Nigerians everywhere. They had to make sure their

rights were safeguarded and that their opinions were heard on a global scale. Corruption, drug-related crimes, and human rights violations have damaged Nigeria's reputation abroad, and the country sought to repair it. Through their worldwide connections and efforts, it aimed to highlight the good side of Nigerian nationals. Citizenship diplomacy also marked a change from Nigeria's traditional emphasis on African issues to a more citizen-centric strategy, with the country's leaders finally acknowledging the power of ordinary Nigerians to influence international events (Piate and Eminue, 2022). A great deal of writings have tended to support this view. According to Mbachu (2007), it all started when he realised that every Nigerian, whether at home or in Diaspora, should be worried about the country's development, success, and survival. Citizen diplomacy, according to Okocha and Nzeshi (2007), is an effective strategy for countering unfriendly nations' portrayals of Nigeria as corrupt and preserving the country's good name. The goal of citizen diplomacy, according to Okaiyeto (1999), should be to make our foreign policy the strongest expression of our identity. Individual Nigerians, according to Akinterinwa's (2007) conception of citizen diplomacy, should be the centre of attention in any endeavour by Nigeria's foreign policy, with the goal of making them key players and the primary recipients of any benefits accruing from such an undertaking. Moreover, regardless of their location, people must be given the necessary tools to face the evolving threats posed by globalisation. He listed several obstacles that the Nigerian government must overcome in order to put its new foreign policy strategy into action. These include, among other things, protecting Nigerians from sexual harassment and other forms of abuse when applying for visas to accredited diplomatic missions, fostering respect for Nigerians both at home and abroad, and, most importantly, encouraging Nigerian business owners to participate in peacekeeping and peace-building tasks on a regional and subregional level. Citizenship diplomacy, according to Ogunsanwo (2007), means that Nigerians living abroad should be considered the country's primary priority moving forward, and that all of Nigeria's diplomatic efforts should be directed towards ensuring their economic well-being and other interests. He went on to say that our diplomatic mission overseas cannot be conducted with any diplomacy that disregards this factor. The primary objective of our foreign policy, according to Osita (2007), may be expressed via citizen diplomacy. Being people-centered, it goes on to say that the desire to improve the welfare and security of citizens would drive activities on a national and worldwide level. Lastly, the following were the essential components of citizen diplomacy as outlined by Eze (2007): (i) The state of Nigeria and its citizens need to be the principal emphasis of the nation's diplomatic efforts. That is, Nigeria's foreign policy should revolve on its inhabitants, while the country upholds its pledges to aid Africa's progress. (ii) The foreign policy of Nigeria must help the nation achieve its goals of development and societal betterment, and it must support and play a substantial role in achieving President Yar'Adua's Seven Point Agenda for Vision 2020. (iii) As a matter of citizen rights and responsibilities and obligations of the Nigerian government, missions overseas are obligated to interact with the Nigerian community and the Nigerian Diaspora, providing them with excellent consular and other services. (iv) Instead of limiting participation to a select group of specialists and practitioners, foreign policy should be democratically made and implemented with the full participation of all Nigerians. (v) When interacting with other nations, Nigeria shall adhere to the basic tenet of reciprocity. (vi) Despite the propaganda machine employed by certain states that are jealous of Nigeria's international renown and refuse to acknowledge the country's immense contributions to world civilisation, socioeconomic development, scientific advancement, peace and security efforts on a subregional, regional, and global scale, Nigeria will not be portrayed as a haven for ardent criminals based on the heinous actions of a small number of its citizens. (vii) The success of any effort by the Nigerian government to influence international affairs depends on how well it safeguards and promotes national interests and the well-being of Nigerian people. (viii) Regardless of whether the suspected Nigerian nationals are charged with violating the laws of the host nations, they would be safeguarded and defended wherever in the globe they may be. (ix) Finally, for the sake of their nation, Nigerians should always act with the utmost integrity, politeness, and exemplary behaviour, whether they are at home or abroad.

Because Nigeria's government has failed to articulate the country's priorities, citizen diplomacy has failed to improve the country's image abroad. This is despite the fact that the country has made it a foreign policy priority. Thus, it seems that citizen diplomacy did not provide the desired result as a result of a combination of internal and external circumstances. It is reasonable to doubt the efficacy of citizen diplomacy as a foreign policy initiative in Nigeria due to the country's internal problems, which include a high crime rate, poverty, insecurity, and crumbling infrastructure and economic policies. The officials also treated ordinary Nigerians poorly. The Nigerian police, who were supposed to keep the peace and prevent crimes, turned into terrorists who brutally attacked civilians, illegally detained and arrested innocent people, and engaged in extortion of all kinds. In Nigeria, for example, there were widespread demonstrations on October 8, 2020, in support of ENDSARS, since the security agency has been implicated in several human rights violations, including unlawful stop-and-searches, wrongful arrests and detentions, extrajudicial executions, sexual harassment of women, and brutality against young men. Popular videos on social media revealed the human rights violations. On a global scale, a number of events, such as the deportation and subsequent defection of Nigerians overseas, have sparked a lively debate about the ineffectiveness of citizen diplomacy. The Federal Government has shown little to no interest in addressing these issues. The real purpose of citizen diplomacy is called into doubt by the mistreatment of Nigerians due to racism and xenophobia, the excessive inspection of Nigerians at international airports, and the failure of the Nigerian Embassy to defend Nigerians living abroad from becoming victims of such acts. The world community's attitude towards Nigerians was one of suspicion, based on the misinterpretation of a small number of individuals, and as a result, many were detained and abused for various crimes. As a result, Nigerians' names appeared on the dead toll in other countries, including Libya, Indonesia, China, and Malaysia. Deportations of Nigerians from the United States, Gabon, and the Congo occurred between 2009 and 2010 during the government of Yar'Adua, the policy's originator (Saliu, 2010). After years of fruitless attempts by Nigerian authorities to mediate, some of its citizens were either deported without providing the customary diplomatic courtesy or killed without a proper trial. Attacks and abuse of Nigerians in South Africa, Ghana, Togo, and Zimbabwe were also on the rise, as Saliu noted. The topic of diplomatic missions is closely connected to the previous point. Their primary purpose is to ensure the well-being of the general populace. What happened then and what happens today demonstrates that Nigerians despise the notion of visiting their diplomatic representation abroad. Presumably, these missions do not have a very Nigerian-friendly attitude. Their amount of intervention on behalf of Nigerians going through the legal system is disheartening and clearly falls short of what is considered acceptable procedure. For Nigeria's foreign policy to be pursued effectively, the Nigerian Foreign Service, which serves as the strategy's engine room, is strategically important. When a country's diplomatic service is unprepared to deal with international crises, no amount of foreign policy will be effective. The Abuja ministry of foreign affairs has officially stated that the age of citizen diplomacy is not meant to defend lawbreakers abroad, which has not helped with the matter of protecting the rights of Nigerians living abroad (Maduekwe, 2008). The purpose of maintaining diplomatic posts overseas is to serve as a representation of all things Nigerian. The neighbouring country of Ghana follows the international norm of insisting on a fair trial for its citizens until all possible options have been exhausted. Although other nations have the right to arrest Nigerians and foreign nationals living in their countries for questioning, it is reasonable to expect Nigerian nations to step up and intervene for their distressed citizens, even in the absence of official citizen diplomacy. Disappointing results from diplomatic missions and the country's foreign policy as a whole are rooted in the inadequate budget. There will be little to no success in foreign policy as long as its budget does not keep pace with the rapidly evolving problems that impact it. The general climate of Nigerian government does not actively foster the support and encouragement of citizens, which contributes to the policy's unfavourable reputation. Citizens are concerned that critical concerns are being ignored. Politicians in Nigeria seem more concerned with the possibility of indulging in rudimentary accumulation than with improving the lives of their

constituents. In this light, the research looked at the goals and performance of citizen diplomacy as a foreign policy drive for Nigeria. To rephrase, how is it that a foreign policy initiative that aims to include more Nigerians in shaping their country's foreign policy and provide them with safety is, paradoxically, discouraging them from becoming involved? Citizens must regard the practice of citizen diplomacy as advancing the domestic national development agenda for it to be legitimately recognised as a foreign policy push for Nigeria, according to the primary premise of this research. Given this, the study's overarching goal is to resolve the following questions: how far has Nigeria's foreign policy thrust of citizen diplomacy gone in alleviating the suffering of Nigerians overseas and, by implication, how much of an impact has it had on the country's reputation abroad? When it comes to foreign policy, how effective has citizen diplomacy been in bringing about the desired changes for the betterment of the country's citizens? What obstacles have slowed down or prevented the success of this approach?

Theoretical Explication of the Discourse

In order to analyse the topic matter, the research used political realist theory. Since the end of WWII, realist theories have dominated the field of international affairs. Hans J. Morgenthau's groundbreaking book, *Policies among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* marked the pinnacle and apocalypse of political realism in international affairs. The idea of interest as it pertains to power is, in his view, the primary guiding principle of political realism. Accordingly, the realist school of thought primarily considers state power and its manifestation. Put simply, it mostly focusses on practical matters. Realists start with the following premises: (i) there is anarchy in the international system; (ii) sovereign states are the main players in this system; (iii) states are rational unitary actors that act in their own national interest; (iv) states' key "national interest" is ensuring their own survival and national security; (v) states seek to increase their national power as a means to achieve this goal; and (vi) the relations between states are determined by their power and capabilities. (vii) In international relations, nations operate in accordance with national interests, which are defined in relation to national power. The theory contributes to the discussion by providing light on citizen diplomacy, in contrast to realism's conventional emphasis on interactions between states and power politics. According to realists, states may further their national interests via citizen diplomacy by forming alliances, fostering economic relationships, or rebutting unfavourable opinions. For them, it may also be a means of preventing or resolving disputes and keeping global systems stable.

Citizen Diplomacy-cum-the Plight of Nigerians

At the conference's opening ceremony on July 30, 2007, Chief Ojo Madueke, Nigeria's then-foreign minister, emphasised the importance of citizen diplomacy under the Yar'Adua government. In regards to the advancement of the country's economy and the foreign policy of the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (NIIA).

According to Akinterinwa (2010), the following are the cornerstones of citizen diplomacy in Nigeria: (a) The nation and its people should be the top priority in Nigeria's foreign policy. (b) Development should be aimed at in a manner that directly impacts the lives of the people. (c) Foreign policy and domestic policy should collaborate to maximise the benefit to ordinary Nigerians. Indeed, the boundary between domestic policy and foreign policy has collapsed into national security for collective well-being of Nigerians; (d) In line with the servant-leadership philosophy of Mr. President, Nigerian missions abroad must actively engage the Nigerian community and Nigerian diaspora and render quality consular and other services as a matter of rights, duties and obligations; (e) Foreign policy making and implementation must be democratised to involve Nigerians from all walks of life, and not left for a small circle of experts and practitioners alone; (f) Every foreign policy endeavours must meet the litmus test of determining the extent to which it protects and advocates what is best for Nigeria and what will best benefit the Nigerian people; (g) Nigeria should be guided by the principle of reciprocity or diplomacy of consequence in its interactions with the rest of the world; and (h) Nigeria and Nigerians will not accept being criminalized by the international community simply based on the despicable conduct of a

few of their nationals. Proper recognition is due for the tremendous accomplishments and enormous contributions of Nigeria and Nigerians to world civilisation, economic development, scientific advancement, peace, and security.

Ujara and Ibietam (2014) state that citizen diplomacy is a type of Nigerian foreign policy that aims to respect Nigerians abroad and in diaspora, encourage the increasing number of Nigerians in diaspora to invest in the country's economic growth, improve the international perception of Nigeria and its people, and ensure that Nigerians in diaspora who seek consular assistance receive prompt and adequate diplomatic attention. This is according to Nwogbaga (2013).

All of the above points to various kinds of citizen diplomacy. One perspective is diplomacy that focusses on the people. Ogunsanwo (2009) argues that Nigeria's diplomatic apparatus ought to represent the nation's concern for the welfare of its expatriate population. The diplomatic obligation to safeguard Nigerian interests abroad was established by the Vienna Convention on the Law of Diplomatic Relations in 1961. But doing so apart from the constraints of international law is obviously not going to happen. Based on what Ojo Madueke has said, it seems that this part of our ambassadors' responsibilities overseas has not been given enough consideration before. This, according to Ogunsanwo, is problematic since there are a lot of Nigerians living overseas, and their interests may not align with each other's or with the stated goals of the Nigerian government.

On the other hand, he believes it's reasonable to presume that the minister would not normally expect a Nigerian ambassador serving abroad to prioritise the needs of a Nigerian citizen residing in the accredited country above officially sanctioned government policy objectives. To illustrate his thesis, he says that pimps from Nigeria who work in Italy and Belgium can use the fact that prostitution is illegal in those countries as a reason to defend their practice. But Nigerian diplomats posted in such countries are not authorised to help in any way.

Another perspective is that everyone is a diplomat. Every Nigerian should always think of themselves as a diplomat, says Ogunsanwo (2009). To rephrase, everyone should not have assumed that the official Nigerian diplomats stationed abroad were the only ones responsible for advancing and safeguarding Nigeria's national interest abroad; rather, it was a collaborative effort. While representing our nation, Nigerians living abroad must always keep in mind that they are the eyes and ears of the world (Ogunsanwo, 2009; Nwogbaga, 2013, Ujara and Ibietam, 2014). The opposite is true with professional diplomats, whose livelihood depends on damaging the country's image.

Ogunsanwo believes this version is incorrect since protecting the country's image abroad requires ambassadors to pay attention to more than only Nigerian people. It should be mentioned that there are a lot of con artists in Nigeria who prey on tourists and damage the country's reputation by using internet cafes.

Given the foregoing, "citizen diplomacy" is a political framework that defines the accidental or deliberate interaction between regular people and officials of other nations or causes. In contrast to formal meetings between government officials, "Track Two Diplomacy" refers to more casual interactions between people from other nations (Agbu, 2009). The millions of Nigerians now residing abroad are effectively acting as Nigeria's ambassadors; this is both a strategy and a technique. To rephrase, the Nigerian people should be the focal point of Nigeria's diplomatic initiatives and the principal beneficiaries of any international engagement (Akinterinwa, 2010). The Nigerian government must consistently prioritise the basic needs, human rights, safety, and socioeconomic welfare of its citizens in all its international dealings, whether they are bilateral or multilateral (Nwogbaga, 2013). The ultimate goal of our foreign policy is outlined here, or at least the one that should be. It is people-centered in more ways than one; it goes beyond just saying that as a country, Nigeria would work mainly to improve the lives of its citizens on a national and international level. All things considered, Nigeria's foreign policy will now revolve on Nigerians both domestically and abroad, thanks to the adoption of citizen diplomacy by the country under the late President Yar'Adua. The focus on Africa in Nigeria's foreign relations policy goes back a long distance; this transformation is just incremental. Rather, as Folarin (2013)

explains, it is a policy makeover with an emphasis on citizens. Put another way, the country's internal and international policies will be in sync with one another to ensure that its residents are at the core of all actions.

The assessment of citizen diplomacy under the government of the late President Yar'Adua was not entirely satisfying, considering the instances of internal and foreign abuse of Nigerians. This is because, according to Nigeria's foreign policy, citizen diplomacy was supposed to put Nigerians' interests first, both at home and abroad. The Nigerian government has never been more concerned about the safety of its residents, much alone those residing outside the country's boundaries, especially with the emergence of citizen diplomacy. This is why, with a fair dosage of scepticism, it is tempting to accept this. Consequently, the question arises as to how beneficial the Nigerian government has been to Nigerians living in Nigeria and how beneficial the Nigerian mission has been to the welfare of Nigerians living overseas. The host countries allegedly abuse Nigerians who have made the world their home (Piate and Eminue, 2022). According to Piate and Eminue (2022) and Ujara and Ibietan (2014), there have been instances when the reasons for the expulsion, torture, marginalisation, and imprisonment of Nigerians in other nations have remained unclear. That doesn't mean every Nigerian is flawless, however. For instance, new data from the Nigeria Drugs Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) shows that a sizable portion of the Nigerian population is now incarcerated abroad, with many of them serving life sentences or even the death penalty. According to the statistics, 73 Nigerians were incarcerated in Malaysian jails for offences linked to drug trafficking as of the year 2022. The Brazilian city of Sao Paulo is now housing 144 Nigerians inmates facing drug-related offences in the year 2022. There are now 650 Nigerians doing time in Thai prisons for a range of offences, including drug-related ones. On death row in Saudi Arabia were 23 Nigerians convicted of drug-related offences. Crimes involving the possession of psychotropic and narcotic drugs are punishable by death. The people were detained in 2016 at King Abdul-Aziz International Airport in Jeddah and in 2017 at Prince Muhammad Bin Abdu-Aziz International Airport in Madinah for having illegal drugs concealed in their genitalia (THISDAY August 25, 2019). Brazil, Malaysia, and Thailand are among the countries that have been in discussions with Nigeria's administration to figure out how to stop drug traffickers from entering their country. The MOU states that before Nigerian citizens may submit their visa applications, the government must provide its approval.

There have been several instances of unjust treatment of Nigerians, in addition to the one described above. Some Nigerians in Togo were wrongfully imprisoned in 2010 and subjected to terrible, inhumane treatment for no reason other than their nationality (Ujara and Ibietan, 2014; Akinterinwa, 2010). In addition, 18 individuals in Tripoli and Benghazi were executed in 2010 out of more than 200 Nigerians on death row, all of whom refused to disclose their names (Akinterinwa, 2010). It seems like there's no end to the people who abuse Nigerians; according to Ujara and Ibietan, no one is safe. The xenophobic and Afrophobic assaults in South Africa, particularly in May 2008, were horrific. In 2008, an assault occurred in Nigeria targeting civilians and businesses. The incident claimed the lives of over 62 people and displaced countless more. Numerous victims had their homes and businesses broken into, suggesting a planned assault on Nigerian businesses in South Africa (Michael and Mohamad, 2017; chairman and piper, 2012; Alli, 2010). South African police and security forces have been involved in incidents of brutality, intimidation, and harassment, and several Nigerians have died in extrajudicial killings. If there were enough job opportunities in Nigeria for qualified citizens, Michael and Mohamad argue, then few would have flocked to South Africa and other countries offering jobs, putting their lives in danger and subjecting them to horrific treatment. The failure to resolve the internal inconsistencies in Nigeria about citizen diplomacy, which are factors in the mistreatment of Nigerians and the country's image issue overseas, suggests that the Nigerian government does not comprehend the home implications of its foreign policy.

In contrast to Nigeria, nations such as France and Germany provide diplomatic immunity to its people, regardless of whether they are accused of a crime or not. An example of this is the interception of a plane carrying 132 African children destined for neoslavery in

Europe in October 2007 at N'djamena Airport in Chad (Al-Bashir, 2008). The plane was carrying many foreign people, including French citizens. Nicholas Sarkozy, the former president of France, jumped on a plane to the capital of Chad as soon as he heard about the crime because of how serious it was. That President Sarkozy prioritised his own countrymen over the African children is what Al-Bashir claims proves it. Nigerian authorities detained four people on suspicion of spying, including three German journalists. Regardless of the claimed wrongdoing, the then-German Minister of Foreign Affairs wasted no time in landing in Abuja to rescue them (Al-Bashir, 2008). Indeed, the neighbouring country of Ghana follows the international norm of insisting for the innocence of its people until all possible means of a fair trial have been exhausted. It follows that no state should desert its people, no matter how terrible their crime, according to the United States' and several European nations' citizen diplomacy-cum-foreign policy.

The deplorable treatment inflicted against Nigerians overseas is mirrored domestically by our compatriots in Nigeria. That is, officialdom in Nigeria is notoriously harsh towards the common citizen. The Nigerian Police Force, which is supposed to be responsible for keeping the peace and security within the country, has instead turned into a terrorist organisation that brutally enforces the law, arrests and detains innocent people, and engages in extortion of various kinds (Piate and Eminue, 2022). There have been accounts of police officers taking suspects to an ATM or bank, coercing them into giving over money, and then killing them outside of a courtroom. Bus and taxi drivers who allegedly do not pay their fare or stop for inspection may be fatally shot by even the most routinely patrolling police officers. According to the National Human Rights Commission (2016), a 2014 report by Amnesty International accused some security personnel of extrajudicial murders in the North-East region, where the Army is engaged in insurgent fighting. There are dozens of examples like this one of citizens being mistreated by Nigerian security agents. Unfortunately, the security situation in Nigeria remains unchanged despite the presence of multiple security and law enforcement agencies. These include the Nigerian Armed Forces, the Nigeria Police Force, the State Security Service, the Immigration Service, the National Intelligence Agency, the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, the Nigeria Customs Service, the National Drug Laws Enforcement Agency, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission, etc.

All of the aforementioned security and law enforcement organisations have had their efficiency and effectiveness eroded by cancerous compromises based on religion, tribalism, corruption, and abuse of authority. The "End SARS Protest" was a recent demonstration in Nigeria that drew attention to a police unit that the protesters said was corrupt and abusing its authority. In the article published by BBC News in October 2021: "tens of thousands of young Nigerians took to the streets to protest against police brutality after a video went viral of a man allegedly being killed by the notorious Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), sparking what became known as the #End SARS demonstrations." On November 7, 2020, the Premium Times reported that in reaction to police brutality, protesters in several parts of Nigeria screamed #EndSARS for several weeks in October. Protesters first demanded that the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) of the Nigerian police force be disbanded and that security personnel cease their involvement in criminal activities. It ultimately led to demands for fresh policies and better leadership. Members of the police squad were said to have extorted money from suspects, violated their fundamental human rights, and carried out extrajudicial murders.

In an immigration-related move, the federal government of Nigeria has suggested a new visa policy that would allow visitors to get a visa upon arrival in the country. Fulani herders from other countries do not need a visa to enter Nigeria, according to Abdullahi Bello Bodejo, the National President of Miyetti Allah Kautal Hore, as reported in the Daily Post of January 6, 2020. People are responding in various ways to the policy's security implications; this is just one example. The relevant answer was described in the report as follows:

Which Fulani issues are related to visas? Only a small number of Fulani, mostly highly educated individuals serving in foreign governments, need visas to enter the country. The Fulani don't care whether a visa is free or not; they don't have borders. Oh, absolutely! Throughout the globe, not only in Africa, they are able to travel freely without a visa. No visa issues prevent people from migrating here (Nigeria) from the Sahel, Sudan, Chad, Niger, or Cameroon. You can see the Fulani people wherever they go; the bandits have long sought to tarnish the Fulani people's reputation, and visa issues are of little importance to them. Those who are worried that President Buhari's proposed free visa policy is an attempt to attract Fulani from other nations should just shut up and stop worrying about visas. The Fulani are a well-organised people who know exactly where to put their cows to graze whenever they see grass. The herds just show up anywhere you look and begin grazing without the need for a visa.

The aforementioned highlights the prioritisation of nepotism and tribalism above the welfare of the people, in view of the reported Fulani herdsmen's massacre of many people in different communities throughout Nigeria.

Recently, armed terrorists stormed an Abuja, Nigeria, prison known variously as the "Kuje Prisons" and the "Kuje Medium Security Custodial Centre," freeing a slew of prisoners, including those with a history of terrorism or criminal activity. The Nigerian military chief and president, Muhammadu Buhari, reportedly wasted time at the site asking questions he wasn't supposed to answer (Punch News of July 6, 2022). From the pertinent news statement that the Federal Ministry of Culture and Information released, the following is taken:

"How did the defences at the prison fail to prevent the attack?" The question echoed President Buhari's and most Nigerians' shock and amazement at the scale and audacity of the assault. Inmates, how many in all, were held there? May I kindly enquire as to the overall count of them? How many personnel were on call continuously? Some of them probably had weapons on them. Was there a guard stationed at each of the towers? They acted in what way? Are all of the surveillance cameras working? In a statement to the press after his tour of the impacted regions, President Buhari voiced his displeasure with the reaction and use of intelligence. It seems like the intelligence system failed me. The Federal Ministry of Culture and Information released a press statement on July 6, 2022, asking what makes terrorists capable of plotting an attack, getting weapons, and breaking into a security facility.

Nigeria has faced several threats to peace for quite some time. The continuation of violent crimes has reduced the likelihood of attaining national unity, economic prosperity, and democratic consolidation. Terrorism, banditry, insurgency, and the spread of ethnic militias throughout Nigeria's six geographical zones have dashed hopes that every Nigerian might live in safety. Ensuring the safety of all individuals is of the utmost importance to the Nigerian people and their government, according to Okeke (2022). Crimes perpetrated by ethnic militias, kidnappers, bandits, terrorists, herdsmen, and Boko Haram rip families apart. Many children experience separation from their parents. For many, even the most basic medical treatment is impossible to afford. Orphanage is a common experience for many of these children. Without stable family systems, how can we hope to carry on our human values to future generations? No kid can blossom into their greatest potential in the absence of loving guidance from their parents. When violence stops kids from getting a good education, what kind of future does it threaten? Simple calculations are made more difficult by the complexity and cross-generational nature of the repercussions of insecurity, according to this notion.

Problems with citizen diplomacy and public involvement are just two of many reasons why ordinary Nigerians are not involved in formulating and carrying out the country's foreign policy. The Nigerian executive branch has, for the most part, handled foreign policy decisions throughout the years with little input from parliament or the people at large. The lack of openness in these sectors makes it challenging for citizens to understand and influence the procedures that develop and implement foreign policy. Additionally, the political culture emphasises top-down decision-making, which might discourage civic

involvement. The people seem to have always been overlooked in the implementation of citizen diplomacy, despite many conferences highlighting it as a foreign policy thrust. This is because the country's elites are the ones driving citizen diplomacy and other foreign policy activities in Nigeria, and it's impossible for them to have people-oriented national goals.

II. Conclusion

"Citizen Diplomacy" was the emphasis of Nigeria's foreign policy, which aimed to highlight the role of ordinary individuals in formulating and carrying out national foreign policy objectives. It acknowledges the importance of people's roles in advancing national interests, increasing international understanding, and improving a country's reputation, whether they are at home or abroad. As part of its efforts to foster national development, the government is reaching out to Nigerians both at home and abroad. They are seen as experts in their fields, possible investors, and ambassadors for Nigeria overseas. A major obstacle to citizen diplomacy's efficacy, however, is the distress of Nigerians everywhere. To rephrase, there are a number of reasons, both internal and external, why citizen diplomacy as a foreign policy push has not been successful. On a national level, Nigerian people's overall well-being has been impacted adversely by issues like as human rights violations, high crime rates, poverty, insecurity, and crumbling economic and infrastructure. Internationally, it seems that Nigeria's foreign policy has not advanced in the years after its adoption, and neither the country's image nor the perception of Nigerians residing abroad have changed. This is due to the fact that numerous issues persist, such as the deportation of Nigerians living abroad, racist abuse of Nigerians, xenophobic attacks, excessive airport screening of Nigerians, and the failure of the Nigerian embassy to adequately protect Nigerians living abroad from victimisation. This casts doubt on the efficacy of this foreign policy initiative and serves to further isolate Nigerians from their government, the same issue that citizen diplomacy aimed to resolve. The failure of Nigeria's government to articulate the country's priorities has meant that citizen diplomacy has not improved people's negative impressions of the country. The gap between the Nigerian government and its people has become wider as a result of this. Research shows that Nigeria's foreign policy since independence has been a money pit with little return on investment because the country's leadership has a chronic problem with creating a people-oriented or citizen-centric foreign policy. In order for Nigeria to fully benefit from citizen diplomacy, the country should focus on improving its institutional frameworks, increasing its investment in capacity development, and making sure its people are secure both at home and abroad.

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