

Written evidence submitted by the International Organisation for Peacebuilding & Social Justice (PSJ UK) (IRN0038)

1. Introduction

The International Organisation for Peacebuilding & Social Justice (PSJ UK) is a non-profit organisation that seeks to promote peace, social justice and sustainable development in Nigeria and other parts of the world. We engage with our global network of partners and the Nigerian diaspora in the UK to act as a voice for marginalised communities and to create a model for active community advocacy for minority and other persecuted groups. Our vision is to become the primary support channel, a strong voice, and a trusted ally of every community in Nigeria in the process of peacebuilding and social justice. We aim to achieve this by engaging with national and international institutions in order to persistently advocate for justice and peace, and the rights of the people, especially in marginalized communities. This aim is the driving motivation behind our decision to submit evidence towards the Foreign Affairs Select Committee's inquiry into implementing the Integrated Review in Nigeria.

2. Emerging Opportunities for Aid and Investment

As with the UK, Covid-19 has placed an incredible amount of pressure on Nigeria's economy. Around 90% of Nigeria's exports and over half of its fiscal revenue stems from the country's oil and gas production. So, when their prices dropped in the first quarter of 2020 due to the global economic slowdown, uncertainty swept across Nigeria's business community and potential investors.

However, Nigeria's fledgling science and technology sector offers two significant areas of copious opportunities for investment from the UK's private and public sectors.

Agribusiness

With less than half of Nigeria's 82 million hectares of arable land currently being cultivated, along with a range of water sources, including large bodies of surface water, 3 major river systems and plenty of rainfall, Agribusiness is an area of significant potential for UK investors. Nigeria is already one of the world's largest producers of cassava, cashews, tubers (sweet potato, yams), fruits (mango, papaya) and grains (millet, sorghum, and sesame) – yet underinvestment in the sector due to the economic shift towards oil and gas production, as well as poorly implemented and inconsistent agricultural policies means that this sector is in particular need of foreign direct investment to supplement its growth.

There are a limited number of examples of thriving Agribusiness value chains in Nigeria at the moment. Olam, for instance, source their produce from small scale farmers and support growth across the value chain. The success of Olam underlines the critical role that foreign aid investment plays in the development of this sector of the Nigerian economy. Through the support from USAID Markets, Olam has demonstrated that coordinated financial intervention can generate significant increases in yields for farmers, growth for local economies, and profits for potential investors.

Comprehensive aid and investment interventions into the Nigerian Agribusiness sector are needed to ensure sustainable growth and job creation. Focusing on increasing yields, without the necessary investment into processing and other aspects of the value chain will result in short-term gains, but

not long-term, sustainable, economic growth. Aid and investment into both small- and large-scale Agribusiness are crucial. Supporting the modernisation and market orientation of family farms is also another potential opportunity for the UK public and private sector when investing in Agribusiness in Nigeria. The Commercial Agriculture Initiative launched by the Nigerian government to support the emergence of larger farmers has ultimately been ineffective. Given that the majority of operational Nigerian farms are less than one hectare, many potential Agribusinesses have slipped through the net, and their potential is yet to be cultivated. The UK public and private sector have a fantastic opportunity to capitalise on this emerging sector through the use of broad-based, but targeted aid and investment.

Recommendations

- Targeted investment across Nigeria's Agribusiness value chain. Particularly in critical infrastructures such as warehouses, product storage and logistical systems.
- Facilitate the access of small and medium-sized farmers to inputs through community block farming and value chain digitisation.
- Develop an agriculture insurance framework to support farmers during adverse climate events.

Information Technology

The second area of emerging opportunities for aid and investment in the science and technology sectors in Nigeria is IT. It is one of Nigeria's fastest-growing sectors, increasing from less than 1 percent of GDP in 2001 to almost 10 percent in 2018. Accounting for 23% of internet users in Africa, Nigeria has surpassed South Africa to become the premier investment destination for IT start-ups on the continent, with one of the biggest e-commerce markets in Africa – estimated at \$12 Billion. The IT sector is also a major driver of growth in Nigeria's economy according to the Q3, 2020 GDP report of the National Bureau of Statistics, NBS posting a double-digit growth of over 14%.

Nevertheless, the full potential of IT in Nigeria is yet to be reached. The Nigeria Digital Economy Diagnostic Report by the World Bank highlights how currently Nigeria is only capturing a fraction of digital-enabled growth and that it needs targeted investment in core elements of its digital economy to keep up with competitors.

A specific emerging area within the sector in which the UK government and industry should be paying particular attention is Nigeria's digital financial services. It remains largely untapped and offers major benefits through increased financial inclusion into the digital economy for those in rural areas.

Recommendations

- Support the push for increased digital literacy for both youths and adults.
- Broadly invest in digital financial services to close the gap between economic inclusion of urban and rural Nigerians.
- Encourage the acceleration of digitization of government payments, social transfer, and tax collections.

3. The UK's Historic Links with Nigeria: Opportunities and Challenges

The UK's historic links with Nigeria is not a topic which we should shy away from discussing. Firstly, it offers us an opportunity to reflect on some of the most salient causes of the economic, social and security challenges faced by contemporary Nigeria. Secondly, and most potently, it allows organisations such as PSJ UK, the Nigerian diaspora in Britain and the UK government to come together and seek new opportunities to build a stronger relationship between the two states as equals, allies and partners.

Post-Colonialism and the Nigerian State

Before discussing the abundant opportunities for constructive engagement between Nigeria and the UK, we must address the lingering effects that British colonialism has had on instability in the region.

Contemporary Nigeria is multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-religious; however, this is not an organic occurrence. Rather, it stems from Governor Lord Frederick Lugard's decision, on January 1st 1914, to consolidate the regions of the Northern Nigeria Protectorate and the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria, forming what came to be known as the Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria.

When looking at modern Nigeria, we can still see feel the presence of pre-colonial civilisations, tribes, and territories. In the North, Islam is the predominant influence, which is no surprise given that in the 19th century two Islamic empires, the Sokoto Caliphate, and the Bornu Empire, were based in this region. To the southwest laid numerous Yoruba city-states, the Oyo and Ife Kingdoms and in the southeast was the Igbo kingdom Nri, and a collection of semi-autonomous towns and villages spread across the Niger River delta.

Lugard's amalgamation of these regions resulted in the creation of a state which was linguistically, religiously, and politically distinct. It is no surprise then, that a significant proportion of the instability and insecurity faced in Nigeria currently, is often attributed to the very foundations of the state.

A decline in the strength of national identity and pan-Nigerian sentiment has resulted in social and economic disparity between many Nigerian citizens. From this stems the highly volatile state of insecurity and violence which has spread across the country; an issue that is at the heart of the work we do at PSJ UK. In the Northeast, Boko Haram and ISWAP have been engineering acts of insurrection and indiscriminate violence against civilians and military forces. There is also evidence of targeted attacks on Christian communities and places of worship. Zamfara, Katsina, Kaduna and Sokoto states are being plundered by bandits, kidnappers, and other armed malcontents, who in some instances have also demonstrable links to terrorist groups.

Significant numbers of militant Fulani herdsmen in Benue, Nasarawa, Taraba and other North Central states have been targeting indigenous farms with campaigns of violence in an effort to displace and colonise their lands. These same Fulani herdsmen have also occupied forests in the South of Nigeria, committing murders and arson. The escalation in the incidences of mass

kidnapping of students in various institutions of education has a double negative effect by depriving the nation of future leaders in all sectors whilst also drawing away the same pool into criminal and terror activities.

There is currently a heightened state of insecurity across the entire nation as evidenced by the almost weekly kidnapping of school children (both male and female), murder and impunity directly associated with the herdsmen's issue. Indeed, kidnapping has become an industry of its own in the Nigerian state with evidence of collusion from parts of the security apparatus. This has led to a situation in which children, particularly girls, no longer attend educational establishments in parts of the middle belt and the Northern region of the country. Farmers are unable to attend to their farms and in some areas, those who do are captured, raped, or even killed.

Thus, the current situation faced by Nigeria, and in turn – due to the clear colonial link underpinning the issue – the UK, is one of enormous magnitude. Without intervention, the violence and insecurity detailed above have the potential to risk the stability of the Nigerian state as a whole. An inadvertent Balkanisation of Nigeria is certainly a risk, and this would have dire consequences for not only the Nigerian people but also for the UK. As noted in the Integrated Review, Nigeria is a key strategic partner for Britain in Africa. Ergo, the fracturing of the country would result in a serious hindrance to British interests on the continent.

Recommendations

- Address the underlying capacity deficits in both political and military leadership within the Nigerian command and control structures that have exacerbated the security issues.
- Challenge the Nigerian government on specific action on the armed herdsmen conflict
- Invest in schemes that promote a common identity, inclusivity, and the benefits of the nation as a collective.
- Increase support for human rights advocates working on the ground in Nigeria.
- Increase the proportion of CSSF spending to go towards addressing anti-kidnapping and capacity building for security in communities - Community Training and communication tools (Early warning systems)

Opportunities

Whilst the historic UK-Nigeria relationship has been a factor in the current fragility of the Nigerian state, the inextricable link between the two nations offers a vast range of potential opportunities for further developing a constructive and mutually beneficial partnership.

The Nigerian diaspora in the UK must play a significant role in shaping the nature of the UK-Nigerian relationship moving forward. Numerous figures with Nigerian heritage such as John Boyega, Anthony Joshua, and Caroline Chikezie, have left a mark on British culture, media, and sport. As such, it is only right that British Nigerians and Nigerians living in the UK have an input into policies and initiatives developed between the UK and Nigeria. Acting as a link between the Nigerian diaspora in the UK and British policymakers and parliament forms a critical part of the work we do here at PSJ UK and our vision for the future. The Nigerian diaspora community in the UK are also keen to invest in well-structured UK based initiatives set up for the primary purpose of improving the various sectors of the Nigerian economy and its institutions.

The pre-existing relationship between the UK and Nigeria offers the British government a fantastic opportunity to further entrench the ideals of liberal democracy in Nigerian and surrounding regions. This would not only help to secure the rights and freedoms of millions of Nigerians, but also, would allow the UK to confidently engage with a competent Nigerian government that adheres to the fundamental principles of the rule of law, freedom of speech, and electoral transparency. Unfortunately, the current administration cannot be said to be achieving this. The End SARs movement and the consequent violence and brutality which followed is evidence of the spread of state co-ordinated tyranny spreading throughout Nigeria. Moreover, the recent decision to ban the social media platform Twitter further exacerbates our concern at PSJ UK that Nigeria is slipping into a state of illiberalism and quasi-dictatorship. The UK government has a chance to leverage its relationship with Nigeria and address this issue.

Recommendations

- The UK government should actively seek out opportunities to further engage with the Nigerian diaspora in Britain.
- Increased involvement from the FCDO and ALBs such as the Westminster Foundation for Democracy in order to address issues surrounding human rights and freedoms.
- Targeted economic sanctions against key figures in the Nigerian Government who are guilty of infringing upon the rights of Nigerian citizens.
- Ensure that addressing social justice issues is a predicate in any future trade or cooperative relationship between the UK and Nigeria.

4. Mitigating Inhibiting Factors to Investment

As already previously discussed in this submission, whilst Nigeria has an abundant amount of potential for social and economic prosperity, the violence and insecurity which has spread throughout the country is and will remain the major inhibiting factor to aid and investment opportunities. We at PSJ UK have identified two key areas that, if addressed comprehensively with the support of the British government, could significantly mitigate the issue.

The first of these is implementing a strategically targeted anti-radicalisation education programme in high-risk areas of Nigeria, particularly in the Northern regions. The US government has already taken a similar step through their USAID funded 'Sesame Square' programme (2011-2014), based on the Sesame Street tv show, and using a similar cartoon format. It aimed to spread messages of education for all, gender equity (that girls can do anything), and ethnic and religious tolerance. Given the UK historic ties with Nigeria, and the blossoming partnership we have seen develop over recent years, we believe that the UK backed preventative education programme would have significantly more cut through to those most vulnerable to the allure of radical Islam. A particular emphasis should be placed on using the BBC's reputation as a trusted media source in Nigeria to further disseminate anti-radical messages and encourage adherence to democratic ideals.

The second area of focus for mitigating insecurity in Nigeria and its inhibition to investment is addressing the exacerbating effects of climate change on the Herder-Farmer conflict. The International Crisis Group has noted how rising temperatures and erratic rainfall have intensified resource competition between farmers and herders, both shifting traditional migratory patterns and

exacerbating intercommunal violence. Moreover, global warming increased the severity of droughts and contributed to extreme seasonal inconsistency in water supply across the Sahel and neighbouring countries. Thereby, disrupting the traditional livelihoods of farming and herding, increasing economic uncertainty, and stoking the tensions between the Fulani and other ethnic groups. Whilst the Nigerian government has attempted to address this issue through its National Livestock Transformation Plan, this policy fails to mitigate the effects of climate change and thus ultimately is unsustainable. Given the UK's leadership on the world stage on issues surrounding environmental policy, combatting insecurity in Nigeria whilst simultaneously addressing the effects of climate change in the region would certainly fulfil this government's vision for 'Global Britain' as laid out in the Integrated Review.

5. Conclusion

Through our submission of evidence to this committee's inquiry, We at PSJ UK hope to have highlighted some of the most salient points regarding the implementation of the Integrated Review in Nigeria. Particularly, we wished to showcase the potential opportunities for collaboration between these two great countries, both in terms of a desire for shared economic prosperity and a united effort to combat the issues surrounding insecurity in the region which act as a major inhibiting factor to aid and investment. Without addressing the security issues urgently, the integrity of the state of Nigeria is at significant risk. These should be addressed through a multi-pronged approach incorporating economic and social policies, as laid out in our recommendations. The UK's investment in and promotion of the agribusiness and IT sectors will help address the socio-economic elements which have under-pinned, fuelled, and exacerbated the insecurity which will, in turn, limit the UK's return on investment in the country.

Appendix A: Further reading on the work of PSJ UK

- <https://psjuk.org/executive-summary-nigerias-silent-slaughter-genocide-in-nigeria-and-the-implications-for-the-international-community/>
- <https://conservatives.global/three-years-under-boko-haram-is-too-long-bring-back-leah-sharibu/>
- <https://commentcentral.co.uk/the-g7-was-a-great-chance-for-the-west-to-stop-islamic-state-time-is-running-out/>

