

# Nigerian and Israeli Systems of Government: A Comparative Study

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DOI: 10.6007/IJARBSS/v5-i7/1743 URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v5-i7/1743>

## Abstract

*The relations between countries are necessary in a modern globalized world. This is due to the fact that, no country is self-sufficient. As such, countries all over the world have been making both bi-lateral and multi-lateral relations, in order to promote their economic and social well-being, in addition to the protection of their sovereign and territorial integrity. The objective of this study is to identify the factors that bring about the relationship between Nigeria and Israel; and explain the benefits Nigeria derives from the relations. The study employs qualitative research approach in which data were collected through questionnaires with open ended questions. The realist theory of power is adopted in the study to measure the nature of the relations. Realist theory believes that survival is the principal target of every state and each state will do everything possible in order to maximize its likelihood of continuing to exist. It is suggested that, there is a need to bridge the trade margin between the two countries. The research finds that Nigeria-Israel relations in the 21<sup>st</sup> century can best be seen as a relation in which each country tries to gain benefits in the field of trade and commerce, security, religion and culture.*

**Key words:** Nigeria, Israel, System, Government, Comparative study

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Nigeria is a federal republic comprised of 36 states and a federal capital territory, with an elected president and a bi-cameral legislature. It operates the presidential system of government with three distinct but complementary arms, namely: the executive, the judiciary and the legislature, each one acting as a check on the other two. The Executive arm of government, at the federal level, consists of the President, Vice-president and other members of the federal executive council (Ministers) while at the level of the state it is made up of the Executive Governor, The Deputy Governor and other members of the state executive (Commissioners). At the local government level (grass root) it is made up of the Chairman, Vice-chairman and other members of the local council (councillors)(Martin, 2002). Officially the state

of Israel (Jewish republic) is a parliamentary republic in the Middle East, located on the eastern shore (end) of the Mediterranean Sea. Former part of Palestine, Israel achieved independence on 14 May 1948, with an estimated population of 7.908 million people (World Bank 2012). Israel is one of the major powers in the Middle East with vibrant diversified economy and possession of nuclear weapons.

Nigeria and Israel Relations in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century implies diplomatic, cultural, economic and security relations between the two countries. Nigeria and Israel established diplomatic relations in 1960. Israel achieved independence in 1948 and was eager to share its experience and expertise with the newly African state, while Nigeria achieved its independence in 1960. Nigeria was officially founded on 1st of October 1960. This large African country now has grown to accumulate a population of 168.8 million. There are three dominant ethnic groups namely: Hausa/Fulani, Yoruba and Igbo, in addition to the various minorities. A December 2012 report on religion and public life by the PEW RESEARCH CENTER stated that in 2012, 49.3% of Nigeria's population was Christian, 48.8% was Muslim, and 1.9% was followers of indigenous and other religions. The country has developed monolithic (single) oil economy meaning that 95% revenue generation is from crude oil (Martin, 2002). The international relations between countries are necessary in a modern globalized world. This is due to the fact that, no country is self-sufficient. As such, countries all over the world have been making both bi-lateral and multi-lateral relations, in order to promote their economic and social well-being, in addition to the protection of their sovereign and territorial integrity. A Nigeria-Israel relation is a bi-lateral relation between two un-equal partners. As such, there is a great tendency for the latter to exploit the former.

It is allegedly stated that, Israel was behind the Biafra secession movement which led to civil war in Nigeria. The Nigerian civil war known as the Biafra war, 6 July 1967 to 15 January 1970, was an ethnic and political conflict caused by the attempted secession of the southeast provinces of Nigeria as the self-proclaimed Republic of Biafra. The conflict was as a result of economic, ethnic, cultural and religious tensions between the Hausa tribe of the north and the Igbo tribe of the southeast of Nigeria. Over the two and a half years of the war, one million civilians died from famine and fighting. The war became notorious for the starvation of some of the besieged regions during the war, and consequent claims of genocide by the largely Igbo people of the region. This is among the factors that made the relationship between the countries not perfectly stable. As a developed country, Israel has been a centre for weapons manufacturing and marketing, with Nigeria buying weapons from Israel in order to deal with its internal skirmish. For example, the Nigerian army uses Israel made drone for military purpose. The recent arrest of private jet owned by Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) president in South Africa, on board there are two Nigerians and one Israeli with \$9.3 million meant to illegally buy arms, which were intercepted at Lanseria airport northwest of Johannesburg on September 5, 2014, in which the opposition parties alleged that Israel is one of the forces behind the on-going Boko-Haram insurgency in the northeastern part of Nigeria (P.M News, Lagos, Sept 15, 2014). In addition, there are a lots of Israel's investment residing in Nigeria such

as Motorola Israel Limited, SolelBoneh International Group and TAHAL Group. This is another factor which brings doubt about the allegation that, Israel is one of the forces supporting Boko-Haram insurgency in Northeastern Nigeria.

The present study aims to identify the factors that bring about the relationship between Nigeria and Israel and examine the benefits Nigeria gains from its relationship with Israel. A Nigeria-Israel relation is more of security; as such the study explores the security challenges facing Nigeria in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The study is important as it intends to provide thorough analysis of Nigeria-Israel relationship. This will help the policy makers to know the essence of the relationship between the two countries.

### **1.1 Research Questions**

1. What are the factors which bring about the bi-lateral relationship between Nigeria and Israel?
2. What kind of relationship exists between Nigeria and Israel?

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

The study adopts realist theory of power to guide the analysis of relationship between Nigeria and Israel systems of government.

### **2.1 Realist theory**

The realist theory argued that, the state is the key actor or the primary agents in the international politics and there is no actor above the state. Secondly, governments are engaged in a constant effort to ensure the survival of their respective states. Thirdly, states selfishly pursue their national interests, the most vital being the national security (Klarevas, 2004:19). Generally, realist assumes that, the world politics is essentially and unchangeably a struggle among self-interested states for power and position under anarchy. States within realist theory would always feel in-secure about other countries; they always use military power to scare or deter other states and maintain their interests, which constitute their core aim in their foreign policy. From a realist perspective, state has monopoly or total control on the legitimate use of force and that; terrorism is carried out by non-state actors only (Blakeley, 2009).

According to realists, the international system is defined by anarchy; there is no central authority (Waltz, 1979). States are sovereign and of course autonomous of each other; there is no inherent structure or society that can exist or emerge to order relations between them. They are bound only by forcible, meaning that through coercion or their own consent. In such an anarchic system, the state power is the key, indeed, the only variable of interest; because through power only states defend themselves and hope to survive. Realism understands power in many ways such as; militarily, economically, diplomatically but ultimately emphasizes the

distribution of coercive material capacity as the determinant or causal factor of international politics. This vision of the world rests on four assumptions (Mearsheimer, 1994).

First, realists claim that, the survival is the principal target of every state. Foreign occupation and invasion are thus the most pressing threats that each state faces. Even if to say domestic interests, strategic culture, or commitment to a set of national ideals would dictate more benevolent or co-operative international goals. The anarchy system requires that, states constantly ensure that, they possess sufficient power so as to defend themselves and advance their material interests necessary for survival. Secondly, realists hold state to be rational actors. This implies that, given the goal of survival, states will do everything possible in order to maximize their likelihood of continuing to exist. Thirdly, realists assumes that, all states possess some military capacity, and no state knows what its neighbors intend precisely. The world, in other words, is uncertain and dangerous. Fourth, in such a world, it is the great powers; that is to say, the states with most economic advantage or influence especially military might that are decisive. In a nutshell, this view implies that, international relation is essentially great power politics.

## **2.2 Nigeria-Israel Relationship**

The relations between Nigeria and Israel dates back to 1950s, and in 1960s full diplomatic relationship was established between the two countries. Between 1973 and 1992, diplomatic relations were severed. During this period, Nigeria's relations with Israel generated heated controversy. The controversy was based on religious and political division, especially among Nigerian ruling class. The ethnic fragmentation and religious heterogeneity of the country has created a great dilemma on the government's decision to severe diplomatic relations with Israel due to mixed feelings among the country's diametrically opposed religious structure. According to Ojo (1986), Muslims felt that, the move to break the relationship with Israel was not only timely but also desirable, whereas, Christians saw the move as a wrong foreign policy (FP) option. The Nigerian government decided to renew diplomatic ties in 1992, however, the Muslim group shout-out over this policy decision, whereas Christians saw it as a welcome idea. Nigeria-Israel relations are best understood when categorized into periods:

1960-1966 (Era of peaceful diplomatic relations): Nigeria initiated series of agreements with Israel on development projects, running into millions pounds. More so, between 1960 and 1966, Nigeria and Israel had series of bi-lateral agreements that cuts across agriculture, educational network, trade, medical institutions and technological training. Top levels ministerial meeting were held, and friendly relations, beneficial to both people were developed. Mutually beneficial economic relations were also developed, including many ventures, and the Israel-Nigeria water companies. Major Israel Companies and private entrepreneurs became involved in the development of the newly independent Nigeria (Omotere, 2011). However, by 1966, beginning with the military *coup de tat* in Nigeria, the two countries entered into a phase of unstable peace in their diplomatic relations. The Nigeria-Israel

relations equally suffered a great setback as a result of the Nigerian civil war (1967-1970) that bedeviled the Nation for about 30 months. Nigeria perceived a foul-play toward Israel for its alleged sympathetic role played by supporting the defunct republic of Biafra, during the country's civil war. Thus, between 1967-1972, Nigeria-Israel relations, though unstable, still witnessed growth in economic and trade ties (Omotere, 2011).

Between 1973-1991, era of severed diplomatic relations, Nigeria-Israel relations suffered a major setback due to the outbreak of the October 6 to 25, 1973 Middle East war (or Yom Kippur war as tagged by Israel). General Yakubu Gowon the then Nigerian president blamed Israel for the renewal of hostility in the Middle East. Being the Chairman of the organization of African Unity, Gowon strangled ties with the Israel government which invariably made other OAU members to follow suit (Omotere, 2011). After the Gowon's administration was overthrown by General Murtala Muhammed, subsequent administrations in Nigeria have towed the pro-Arab foreign policy in the Arab-Israel conflict. Despite the fact that, the Obasanjo's regime renounced the use of Zionism to categorize the Israel political system, Major General Musa Yar'adua, the second in command, declared in Saudi Arabia in 1979 that "our friends are the Arabs, we shall always support them". (Omotere, 2011). Beginning from 1991, efforts were made by the then head of state General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida to restore diplomatic relations with Israel. However, this came into effect in 1992, when for the first time: Nigeria established an embassy in the Republic of Israel, which is headed by one of its most experienced Ambassadors. Unfortunately, this era of restoration of diplomatic relations (1992-1993) did not last long. As both the countries were preparing for closer co-operation, crises erupted in Nigerian foreign relations under General Sani Abacha regime (Omotere, 2011).

Between 1994 and 1998 is the era of decline in diplomatic relations, the two countries witnessed another era of poor relations. The administration of Abacha forced Nigeria to enter into a period of isolation, which invariably deteriorated the mutual co-operation established by the regime of Babangida. Towards the end of 1998, Nigerian internal politics changes which paved way for the preparation of Israel to chart new diplomatic relations with Nigeria. The General Abdussalami Abubakar administration relieved the tensions between Nigeria and Israel (Omotere, 2011). In the year 1999, Nigeria entered another phase of democratic government, which in turn had positive impact on her relations with other countries including Israel. In other words, Nigeria-Israel relations from 1999 up to date, a stable peace diplomatic relations was warm and firm. The newly elected president of Nigeria Olusegun Obasanjo, with his global shuttle diplomacy restored Nigeria's relations with Israel. This was expressed in reciprocal visits by high-level government officials and the intensive exchange of technical and professional knowledge through MASHAV (The Israeli Centre for International Co-operation Programmes). The Commercial and Economic relations between the countries also thrived during this period, as more and more Israeli companies from various sectors were attracted to invest in Nigeria (Omotere, 2011).

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

Political inquiry is essentially an investigative process. It is undertaken in order to discover facts, gain additional information, confirm or reject political knowledge and to generate better understanding and explanation, as well as to provide solutions. In the course of this research, the researcher used qualitative method of data collection, which produces words, more open and provides for depth and richness. And secondary data shall be use, to gather information through published, unpublished works, official's publications, reports, articles, archives and newspapers. The instrument to be used in collecting data is questionnaire with open ended discussion, which allows the researcher to choose respondents on the basis of certain peculiar or special qualities. The research used security officers as respondents.

### **4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

In the course of this research, the data were collected from the officers working with the Nigerian Police Force. The questionnaires were distributed among the security personnel. And the demographic information is as follows:

One of the limitation of the research was that only eleven (11) respondents were able to answer the questionnaire which includes three (3) Inspectors representing 27.2%; two Deputy Superintend of Police (DSP) representing 18.2%; two (2) Assistant Superintend of Police (ASP) representing 18.2%; two (2) Police Constable (PC) representing 18.2%; in addition to one (1) Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP) representing 9.1% and lastly one (1) Police Sergeant (PS) representing another 9.1%. Furthermore all the respondents come from the Nigerian Police Force. Regarding the officers years' with the organisation, the research categorized it in to two: the first category is between one year (1) to nineteen (19) years range, which is only four (4) officers representing 36.4%, while the other category is between twenty (20) to thirty (30) range, which is seven representing 63.6%. This is a clear indication that majority of the respondents have vast experience.

#### **4.1 Research Question 1: What are the factors that bring about the bi-lateral relationship between Nigeria and Israel?**

Among the factors that bring about the bi-lateral relationship between Nigeria and Israel is the Boko Haram which is a threat to national security in Nigeria. Boko Haram is an Islamic religious sect that came into the limelight in 2002 when the presence of the radical Islamic sect was first reported in kanama (Yobe State) and also in Gwoza (Borno State). Boko Haram, which in the local Hausa language means "Western education is forbidden," officially calls itself "Jama'atulAhluSunnaLidda'watiwal Jihad", which means "people committed to the propagation of the Prophet's teachings and Jihad" (Meehan and Speier 2011:6). Beyond religious explanations, Boko Haram could be arguably described as a (home grown) terrorist group that romances with some desperate politicians in the North. It appears that the sect enjoys effective support from some well-to-do individuals, religious leaders, allies, admirers of the ideology and highly placed politicians in the North who claim to be Nigerians but are clandestinely working against the state. "It is no longer a sect of Islamic fanatics but has the

support of disgruntled politician and their thugs (Lister, 2012 cited in Adagba, Ugwu and Eme, 2012:85). Recently, revelations and security investigations into the activities of the sect tend to affirm that the group is also sponsored from within the country. This transpired within the period when a serving Senator from the North is on trial for aiding the activities of Boko Haram. Thus, a senior official of Boko allegedly granted an interview detailing how the sect had been on the payroll of a few governors of the North (Adagba et al, 2012).

Thus, Boko Haram seems to be a destructive political tool with a cosmetic pretension of being religious. The bombing of Nigeria Police Headquarters in Abuja on June 16, 2011, the U.N house in Abuja on August 26, 2011 and other high profile bombings attest to this assertion. Nigeria does not seem to have suffering only the economic setback caused by Boko Haram's bombings but also suffers from the battered image and humanitarian disaster the group inflicted on her. For example, between July 27, 2009 and February 17, 2012, Boko Haram has launched fifty three (53) attacks in which 1157 people were killed and hundreds people injured in Northern Nigeria (adapted from a graph in Adagba et al, 2012). This indiscriminate and sporadic bombing seems to make Northern Nigeria increasingly unsafe and has compelled most non-indigenes of the region to relocate especially the Igbos. This phobia of being attacked especially in cities like Kano, Kaduna, Maiduguri, Jalingo and Yolawas responsible for the exodus of people from the North to other parts of the country as witnessed in the last few months.

The Igbos residents in Kano are living with naked fear and apprehension. Though there are few of us who like to stay and defend ourselves, the majority of us, particularly children and women want to leave the North (Kano), because unfolding events indicate that the North ((Kano) is no longer safe for the Easterners... OhanaezeNdigbo Kano, hereby calls on the governors of the Eastern States in the South-South to provide means of transportation with adequate security to evacuate our brethren who would want to leave because human life is precious and should be protected as such (Idika cited in Phillip, 2012:16). In 2011, Boko Haram groupcarried out suicideattack on United Nation Headquarters in Abuja in which twenty peoplewere reportedly killedandmore than sixty wounded (Nossiter, 2011). Thisattackhad drawntheattention of theinternationalcommunities, about thethreats of thesect which wasnow no longernational, but global. The Boko Haram attacks since 2011 havefeatured the use of highly sophisticated modern weapons, improvisedexplosivedevices (IEDS), carbombs, andperiodicalsuicidebombing,the merciless sect causes so many destruction andterrible moments to thepeople by continueing burning anddestroyingthecomunitiesusingsmallarmsandarson (Plouch, 2014).

According to Onuaha (2014), An evidence of Boko Haram's reached beyond thenationalborders of Nigeria its expandinginternationalnetwork which enableit to recruitandtrainmembers from thecountries of the Sahara –Sahel region".The United Nation reportwasquoted to have linked Boko Haram with al Qaeda in theland of Islam Maghreb (AQIM), thegroups has wellconnection with one another, andthe Boko Haram wasinfluenced by theideologyand tactics of the (AQIM) (Nossiter, 2012).According to thereport, many of thegroupmembersweretrained in Sahel

alongside (AQIM), this connection continues where a large number of Boko Haram members attended an (AQIM) training centre in Timbuktu Mali during the summer of 2011. These members later came back and became the influential figure of the Boko Haram

From all indications, security is a big challenge in Nigeria's effort to develop, and Boko Haram insurgency has compounded the existing threatening security in the country. While it could be true that, security is a major issue globally, Nigeria's security situation has over the years deteriorated owing to poor governance, political desperation and government's inability to deliver the needed dividend. To this end, there is need for government to explore alternative way (basically dialogue) rather than force to finding lasting solution to the security lapses and the menace of Boko Haram if actually Nigeria wants to develop. This is because use of force approach appears to have been inflaming the crises and diverting attention from the fundamental issues that nurtures and propels the insurgency. Doing these demand that governments in the North should retrace their steps to deliver dividend of democracy. The central government should also complement this effort knowing very well that, poverty and hardship could induce crises and financial viability of rebellion and sometimes serves as motivation for engagement.

#### **4.2 Research Question 2: What kind of relationship exists between Nigeria and Israel?**

The relationship between Nigeria and Israel in the 21<sup>st</sup> century which implies diplomatic, cultural, and economic as well as security relations is a power based in which each country try to dictate the outcome of the relations for instance. A United Nations Resolution, calling for an end to Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory by 2017 was shot down on Wednesday 31, December, 2014. The resolution, which urged new talks regarding Palestinian territory prior to Israel's occupation was the product of three months' worth of effort and supported by Arab States. These efforts proved fruitless on 31 December, 2014, when at the last Nigeria broke its traditionally neutral stance and backed out of supporting Palestine (Sahara reporters, 2014). Palestine needed nine 9 votes from the fifteen 15 members of the United Nation Security Council both permanent and non-permanent. Until 2015, Nigeria is one of the ten 10 non-permanent members. Palestine received eight of the needed nine votes. The United States of America and Australia stood against the resolution, while Russia, China, France, Luxembourg, Jordan, Argentina, Chile and Chad voted in its favour. Britain, South Korea, Rwanda, Lithuania and Nigeria notably abstained (Sahara reporters, 2014).

Nigeria's action spoke volumes, as it is reported that, just before the decision, diplomats were under the impression that, Nigeria would vote "yes". A Palestinian Diplomat involved in the negotiations said that "Even half an hour before the vote, Nigeria indicated it was committed to voting for the resolution. We knew that Rwanda, South Korea and Australia would not back it, but we believed Nigeria was on board". (Sahara reporters, 2014). I would like to voice my appreciation and thanks to the United States and Australia, and also special appreciation for the President of Rwanda, my friend Paul Kagame, and the President of Nigeria, Goodluck Jonathan,



that they would not support the resolution. They kept their word, and that's what clinched this matter. I think this is very important for the State of Israel". (Natenyahu, 2014).

## 5. CONCLUSION

In this world, a nation cannot survive without depending or sharing things with others, that is to say there is interdependency between and among the Nation-States. Even though each and every state is autonomous and sovereign, they will act as best as they can in order to maximize their likelihood of continuing to exist. Nigeria-Israel relations in the 21<sup>st</sup> century can be seen as a relationship in which each country is trying to as much as possible gain a lot of benefits in the field of security, trade and commerce and religion.

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