

**AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL AND PROMOTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN
NIGERIA (2015-2023).**

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the role of Amnesty International in the promotion of human rights in Nigeria between 2015 and 2023. The study was motivated by the persistent cases of police brutality, unlawful detention, torture, suppression of peaceful protests, and other human rights violations despite Nigeria's democratic governance and constitutional guarantees of fundamental rights. The study adopted Liberal Theory as its theoretical framework and employed a qualitative exploratory research design. Data were collected from secondary sources, including Amnesty International reports, United Nations publications, government documents, scholarly journals, textbooks, newspapers, and policy papers. Qualitative descriptive analysis and thematic analysis were used to analyze the data. The findings revealed that Amnesty International significantly contributed to exposing human rights violations, promoting public awareness, advocating democratic accountability, and influencing discussions on institutional reforms in Nigeria. The study further found that the organization's advocacy during the #EndSARS protests attracted both national and international attention to police brutality and strengthened demands for accountability. However, its effectiveness was constrained by government resistance, weak institutional enforcement, insecurity, and political interference. The study concluded that Amnesty International has played a significant role in promoting human rights in Nigeria despite existing challenges. It recommended stronger collaboration between government institutions and human rights organizations, improved security sector reforms, and effective implementation of human rights protection mechanisms to strengthen democratic governance and accountability.

Keywords: Amnesty International, Human Rights, Democratic Accountability, Human Rights Advocacy, Nigeria.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Human rights are recognised as fundamental freedoms and entitlements, which all humans enjoy because they are human. These rights encompass the right to life, freedom of expression, freedom from torture, equality before the law, freedom of association, and protection from discrimination. In 1948, the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in a manner that made the modern international human rights system known around the world. Since then, the promotion and protection of human rights has been a key focus of the international community as well as governments, civil society, and international non-governmental organizations (INGOs). International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) have become keenly involved actors in international governance, including in the field of human rights advocacy and protection. They are independent of governments and are frequently active in areas of monitoring government activities, exposing human rights violations, advocating for policy changes, and driving international pressure against oppressive practices. Amnesty International is one of the leading INGOs to promote human rights. Founded in 1961 by Peter Benenson, Amnesty International has grown to be one of the world's biggest human rights groups, with offices in over 150 countries. It is infamous for its investigations of human rights violations, reports, campaigns, and campaigns for justice and accountability throughout the world. Amnesty International's relevance to the situation in Africa, and especially Nigeria, has grown with the continued cases of human rights abuses, insecurity, political instability, and low institutional accountability. Despite Nigeria's reputation as the largest democracy in Africa, there have been escalating human rights issues, including police brutality, illegal detentions, torture, electoral violence, crackdown on free speech, gender based violence, religious conflicts, and state and non-state actors' abuses. The

human rights situation in the country has also deteriorated due to the activities of insurgent groups like Boko Haram, armed bandits, and separatist groups. Human rights violations in Nigeria date back to colonial times and were exacerbated in the military regime from 1966 to 1999. Arbitrary arrests, the suppression of opposition voices, censorship of the media, and extrajudicial killings were frequent during military rule. Nigeria resumed democratic rule in 1999, but the hopes of a significant advancement in human rights have not been realized. There are several reports by local and international organizations of violations of human rights in democratic regimes. Nigeria in 2023 experienced several key human rights-related events, some of which garnered both national and international attention. In 2023, there were many significant human rights-related events in Nigeria that caught national and international notice. At this time, allegations of extrajudicial killings by security agencies, civilian abuse during counterinsurgency operations, attacks on journalists, and restrictions on freedom of expression spread to become widespread concerns. The #EndSARS protest of 2020 is one of the most notable incidents, where Nigerian youths protested against police brutality and human rights abuses allegedly carried out by the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS). Amnesty International reported that security officials had been using excessive force against peaceful protesters, including the killing of civilians at the Lekki Toll Gate in Lagos. Amnesty International was active at this time by documenting, publishing investigative reports, launching advocacy campaigns, and raising international awareness of the situation of human rights in Nigeria. It made a continual appeal to the Nigerian government to investigate abuses, prosecute the offenders, and make reforms for the protection of citizens' rights. Amnesty International has raised awareness around the world about the human rights situation in Nigeria through its reporting and advocacy efforts, and has brought pressure to bear on the government to comply with international human rights norms. Although Amnesty International has been visible and intervened in Nigeria, Nigeria's human rights landscape still leaves unanswered

questions about the effectiveness, impact and limitations of Amnesty's work in the country. It is said that Amnesty International is uncovering abuses and calling for reforms, but that the abuses still continue suggests that there is not much success. Others argue that the group has had an outstanding impact on accountability, public consciousness and international pressure against violations. The study, therefore, aims at critically examining the role of Amnesty International in the promotion of human rights in Nigeria (2015-2023).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Despite the advent of democratic government and Nigeria's ratification of various international human rights conventions, human rights violations remain a major challenge. Police brutality, arbitrary arrest, torture, reports of unlawful killings, suppression of protests, and freedom of expression have all persisted in various parts of the country. There have also been reports of abuses by security services against civilians due to security operations against insurgency and armed conflicts. These recurring violations raise concerns about the effectiveness of institutions and mechanisms set up to ensure respect for human rights in Nigeria.

To meet these challenges, international non-governmental organizations, especially Amnesty International, have stepped up advocacy and human rights defence activities in Nigeria by organizing advocacy campaigns, investigations, making public reports, and international lobbying. Amnesty International's records of human rights abuses have consistently called on the Nigerian government to ensure accountability and justice. Amnesty International, however, is still uncertain as to the impact and effectiveness of its activities in Nigeria, given these interventions and persistent violations of human rights.

Additionally, although some research has been conducted on the state of human rights in Nigeria and the work of non-governmental organizations, few studies have focused specifically on the impact of Amnesty International on human rights in Nigeria between 2015 and 2023. Previous research tends to be quite general, covering civil society organizations as a whole or more general themes of human rights without critically examining the interventions of Amnesty International during this time and the contribution they made to the context, as well as the challenges and limitations.

The question, therefore, is how effective Amnesty International has been in the promotion of human rights and its contribution to government accountability in Nigeria despite its active engagement on the issues of violations and advocacy of reforms. The study aims at closing this gap by critically assessing the role, progress, and challenges of Amnesty International in the promotion of human rights in Nigeria from the year 2015 to 2023.

1.3 Research Questions

The following research questions will be used to guide the study:

1. How did Amnesty International contribute in the promotion of human rights in Nigeria (2015-2023)?
2. How has Amnesty International enhanced judicial reforms on Human Rights in Nigeria from 2015-2023?
3. What were the key human rights concerns raised in Nigeria by Amnesty International as a violation of human right from 2015-2023?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

General Objective

The overall aim of this research is to look at the role of Amnesty International in the promotion of human rights in Nigeria from 2015 to 2023.

Specific Objectives

The specific objectives are to:

1. Review the contribution of Amnesty International towards the promotion of human rights in Nigeria from 2015 to 2023.
2. Evaluate the degree to which Amnesty International has enhanced judicial reforms human rights in Nigeria from 2015-2023.
3. State the key human rights concerns raised in Nigeria by Amnesty International as a violation of human right from 2015-2023.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is important because of the following.

The study will be of value to the scholarly literature on INGOs and human rights promotion in the developing world. It will offer academic perspectives on the contribution of Amnesty International to the human rights situation in Nigeria and would be a benchmark reference document for students, researchers, and scholars in Political Science, International Relations, Peace and Conflict Studies, Sociology, and related disciplines.

Policy-wise, it will offer relevant information to policymakers, government institutions, and human rights organisations regarding the significance of international organisations in supporting the strengthening of the protection mechanisms for human rights. The results could also help inform policies that promote accountability, transparency, and institutional changes related to the security and justice sector in Nigeria.

The study will create much awareness in the society about the activities of Amnesty International and the wider issues of human rights in Nigeria, both practically and socially. It will also inform civil society organisations, activists, and the public about methods to promote justice, accountability, and democratic governance. Moreover, the study could play a role in increasing citizens' participation in advocacy and protection of human rights.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The geographical area of study for this study is Nigeria, with particular attention to major human rights issues around the various geographical regions of the country.

Thematically, the research will focus on Amnesty International as an advocacy organisation of human rights. It specifically highlights the advocacy work of the organization, investigative reports, awareness building, influencing government accountability, and challenges faced by the organization in Nigeria. The study also takes into account significant human rights concerns, including police violence, arbitrary arrest, enforced disappearances, freedom of expression, and concerns relating to insecurity and counterinsurgency activity.

The study period is from 2015 to 2023. The era is marked as a critical one due to heightened concerns of human rights in Nigeria, such as the Boko Haram insurgency, #EndSARS protests, and trending discussions about citizens' rights and democratic accountability.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

The following are the limitations of the study.

Several constraints were experienced while undertaking this study. An area that was crippled was the lack of access to confidential government documents and official records regarding investigations and security operations in Nigeria about human rights violations. This limited the use of some primary data used in the study.

Financial constraint was the other limitation. The research process faced challenges in terms of the cost of materials that have relevance to the study, Internet access, and transportation for data collection.

Another limitation was the time constraint due to having to merge the study with other academic activities within a certain timeframe.

Also, there was the potential for bias in some secondary sources, particularly from advocacy groups and governmental bodies, that could provide a skewed view of issues. Nevertheless, an attempt was made to ensure the reliability, objectivity, and validity of the study by using credible and verifiable sources.

1.8 Definitions of Terms:

International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs)

They are autonomous, international organisations not under government control, which work to resolve social, political, humanitarian, and environmental problems.

Amnesty International

Amnesty International is an international human rights group founded in 1961 that works to promote justice, freedom, and human dignity around the world and to fight human rights abuses.

Human Rights

Human rights are all the rights that a person has because they are a human being, regardless of race, national origin, religion, sex, or status.

Human Rights Promotion

Human rights promotion includes the work that is carried out to make people aware of, protect, defend, and promote their rights and freedoms in society.

Advocacy

Advocacy involves a series of organized activities and campaigns that help to persuade public policies, laws, and decisions to be made in favor of a specific cause or group.

Accountability

Accountability is a sense of responsibility or the responsibility that someone, an institution, or a government is bound to provide for what they have done or failed to do, and is held accountable for any violation or misconduct.

Civil Society Organizations

They are non-governmental, non-profit organizations that stand for citizens' interests and values in society.

Extrajudicial Killings

Extrajudicial killings are defined as killings outside of judicial procedures without legal process or court order, typically by security forces or armed groups.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs)

International NGO's (INGOs) are non-public, non-governmental, and voluntary, and work outside of national boundaries to tackle social, political, humanitarian, economic, and environmental issues that impact the world. INGOs operate outside the direct influence of governments but can work with governments, international bodies and local bodies in order to realize their goals. Keck and Sicking (1998) identify advocacy, policy influence, monitoring, awareness creation and mobilisation of international public opinion as critical roles played by INGOs in global governance.

The rise of INGOs was more visible since the Second World War when the United Nations was formed and a greater international emphasis was placed on human rights, democracy, humanitarian aid, and development. The relevance of INGOs was further enhanced by the processes of globalization which enabled transnational cooperation and communication among the societies.

INGOs have a number of significant roles within the international system. These activities comprise: humanitarian help, human rights work, conflict resolution, democracy promotion, environment protection, policy monitoring. INGOs shape domestic and international policies through the means of reports, campaigns, lobbying, and international networking.

The role and validity of INGOs in global politics have been an object of debate among scholars. Liberal scholars say that INGOs help to promote democracy, accountability, and international

cooperation, monitor and check state power. Constructivists focus on the importance of their 'mission' to promote international norms and influence social values on justice and human rights. Realist scholars, however, fault INGOs for purportedly meddling in domestic affairs and for attacking state sovereignty.

The context of developing countries like Nigeria makes INGOs particularly important due to the issues of governance, institutional weakness, insecurity, corruption and frequent human rights abuses. Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and Transparency International are among the groups that have been closely watching governance practices for years and demanding accountability and reform.

2.1.2 Amnesty International

Amnesty International is one of the world's foremost international human rights groups. Founded in 1961 by British lawyer Peter Benenson, who initiated a campaign for people imprisoned for their political and/or religious views. Amnesty International's work has grown to over 150 countries and territories around the world since its inception.

It has been working mainly on the protection and promotion of human rights through investigations, documentation, advocacy campaigns, lobbying, public awareness creation and policy engagement. Amnesty International responds to issues of torture, unlawful detention, extrajudicial killings, discrimination, suppression of free speech, gender-based violence, war crimes and abuses in armed conflict.

Governments, political parties and religious groups play no role in the organization, which is one of its key attributes. This helps build its trust in the monitoring of and reporting on human rights violations. Amnesty International has extensive experience in conducting factual

investigations, witness interviews, digital evidence and international law analysis to inform its reports.

Among Amnesty International's operational strategies are “naming and shaming”, public campaigns, media actions, and international advocacy to ensure governments and institutions respect their international human rights commitments. These have helped the organization to make several human rights reforms and awareness campaigns in the world.

Amnesty International has been actively involved in Nigeria in police brutality, electoral violence, freedom of expression, gender rights, insurgency-related abuses and military operations. It released several reports of alleged abuses in counterterrorism operations in the North-East between 2015 and 2023, and incidents involving the #EndSARS protests.

Amnesty International, even though it is recognized worldwide, has also been subject to criticism from governments and political actors who have levelled accusations of bias and selective reporting and interference in the domestic affairs. However, the organization continues to be a big player in human rights activism around the world.

2.1.3 Human Rights

Human rights are basic freedoms and rights that belong to all human beings, irrespective of their social status, nationality, ethnicity, religion, gender, race and other factors. Human rights are universal, inalienable, interdependent and indivisible. They serve to safeguard human dignity, freedom, equality and justice in society.

The contemporary idea of human rights has its origins in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948. The declaration put

in place the international norms in protections of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights.

Generally there are three groups of human rights. The first are civil rights and political rights, including the right to life, freedom of expression, freedom of religion, freedom from torture and freedom from unfair hearing. The second category relates to economic, social and cultural rights, such as the rights to education, health, work and home. The third relates to collective or solidarity rights of the right to development, peace and self-determination.

Theoretical debates about human rights usually refer to universality and cultural relativism. Universalists believe that human rights must be respected by all people, all over the world, without regard to culture. Cultural relativists argue that human rights norms should be shaped by local cultural, religious, and historical norms.

There is also a struggle between state sovereignty and international intervention on which there are strong arguments. There has been a debate about the states' right to self-determination in their internal affairs, and the moral obligation of the international community to step in when grave human rights violations are found.

The human rights are constitutionally guaranteed in Nigeria, under the fourth chapter of the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Nigeria additionally has signed into a variety of international and regional human rights instruments. But the enforcement is low as a result of corruption, insecurity, weak institutions, abuse of power, and poor governance.

2.1.4 Human Rights Promotion

Human rights promotion is intentional actions that seek to protect, advance, educate and advocate for the realization of human rights in society. It includes actions to raise awareness,

advocate policy change, build capacity and secure respect for fundamental freedoms and human dignity.

Human rights promotion can be done via advocacy, public sensitisation, legal reforms, policy engagement, monitoring, international pressure and civic education. Human rights are promoted by both the state and non-state actors. Governments are expected to put in place legal and institutional arrangements to uphold the rights of the citizens, while civil society organizations and INGOs will monitor the implementation and demand reforms.

In democratic societies, the promotion of human rights has gained greater significance, to the extent that respect for human rights is regarded as one of the key principles of democratic government and political legitimacy. But in many developing nations, poverty, insecurity, corruption, political instability and weak institutions persist and continue to inhibit good protection of human rights.

Amnesty International and other organisations support human rights by reporting on human rights violations, assisting victims, influencing policymakers, publicising the plight of the human rights victim, and calling for accountability. They engage in activities that lead to increased awareness of violations and to pressures on the government to reform institutions.

2.1.5 CS and HR Advocacy

Civil society: Organised groups and associations that operate without direct government control, which aim to advance collective interests and the welfare of society. Civil society organisations comprise labour unions, student organisations, professional associations, religious organisations, media outlets, community associations, and non-governmental organisations.

One of the primary roles of civil society organisations is to advance human rights. Civil society organizations engage in protest, campaigning, taking court cases, educating the public, media advocacy, and lobbying to oppose injustice, shape policies, and hold others accountable.

Civil society organizations have been very instrumental in the fight against military dictatorship, corruption, electoral malpractice, and abuse of power in Nigeria. Civil society activism has been significant in the drive for accountability and democratic governance in the years since the return to democracy in 1999.

The #EndSARS protest highlighted the continued viability of civil society and youth activism in calling for police reform and the protection of citizens' rights in Nigeria.

2.2 Thematic Review

2.2.1 Human Rights Situation in Nigeria (2015–2023)

Insecurity, poor governance, corruption, and abuse of power have been some of the human rights issues that have plagued Nigeria since 2015 and up to 2023. The North-East was the epicenter of humanitarian crises marked by killings, abductions, displacement of people, and destruction of communities attributable to the Boko Haram insurgency.

Amnesty International and other groups reported that human rights violations were committed by both insurgent and security forces in counterinsurgency activities. Allegations were made of arbitrary arrest, unlawful detention, torture, enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings.

During this time too, police brutality was also a great national concern, particularly the actions of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS). The following citizens alleged that SARS operatives extorted, tortured, harassed, killed and abused them.

This eventually led to the #EndSARS protests in October 2020, which began when Nigerians vented their anger and frustration against police brutality and demanded accountability, police reform, and justice for victims. The protests were put in the international spotlight after

accusations of excessive force being used on protesters by security personnel at the Lekki Toll Gate in Lagos.

Other aspects of freedom of expression and media rights were also affected during the study period. Journalists, activists, and opposition voices were reportedly subjected to harassment, intimidation, arrests, and restrictions for criticising government policies.

The overall situation of human rights in the country was affected by gender-based violence, communal conflicts, religious intolerance, kidnapping, and insecurity.

2.2.2 Amnesty International and Human Rights Promotion in Nigeria

Amnesty International has been involved in significant contributions to human rights in Nigeria through investigations, advocacy campaigns, public awareness creation, and lobbying internationally.

Investigation and documentation of human rights violations is one of the organisation's core activities. Amnesty International carries out field investigations and interviews witnesses, collects evidence, and publishes comprehensive reports, documenting abuses by state and non-state actors.

The organisation has also achieved great success in raising awareness about human rights issues. Amnesty International disseminates information to the local and international community through media engagement, social campaigns, press releases and publications about Nigeria's developments.

Advocacy for accountability and reforms is also a key function that Amnesty International carries out. It also regularly urges Nigerian authorities to prosecute perpetrators and to make institutional improvements in response to allegations of abuse.

Amnesty International has also been seen to play an active role during the #EndSARS protests, documenting alleged cases of shooting and police brutality and calling for impartial investigations. The organization also made demands on the reform of the police and the freedom of citizens.

In addition, Amnesty International works with local civil society groups, journalists, lawyers, and activists to build advocacy and enhance accountability in Nigeria through democracy.

2.2.3 provides an overview of the challenges confronting human rights organisations in Nigeria.

Nigeria's human rights organisations are beset with various challenges which impact their effectiveness in their operations.

Political resistance and government hostility present are a major challenge. Human rights groups have been charged with bias, misinformation and interference in domestic affairs at times by authorities. This can undermine confidence and reduce inter-agency and government cooperation.

Human rights advocacy is also impacted by security concerns. Journalists, researchers, and activists face intimidation, harassment, and physical dangers when investigating human rights abuses in conflict zones.

Another major obstacle is funding. External funding is significant for many civil society organisations, and can affect operational sustainability and capacity.

Advocacy is further hindered by weak laws and ineffective institutions. Authorities fail to take measures based on recommendations and reports from human rights groups, limiting the impact.

There are also challenges for organizations advocating for accountability and reform due to public misinformation and politicization of human rights issues.

2.2.4 Human Rights and Democratic Governance in Nigeria

The relation between human rights and democratic governance is close, as it is expected that democratic governance will enhance citizens' freedoms, rule of law, participation and accountability.

Since Nigeria returned to democratic rule in 1999, hopes have been placed in democratic institutions to enhance the respect for human rights. But, democratic governance in Nigeria still has its fair share of challenges such as corruption, misuse of power, electoral violence, insecurity and a lack of institutional strength.

There have been numerous reports of security agencies having inadequate accountability mechanisms and of victims of abuse having access problems to justice.

But, despite these difficulties, democracy has opened room for civil society activism, freedom of the media, and citizens' rights awareness. Democracy is still being used by groups like Amnesty International to campaign for change and hold those in power to account.

2.3 Theoretical Review

2.3.1 Liberal Theory

Liberal Theory is one of the most significant theoretical frameworks employed to explain the issue of democracy, international cooperation, civil society activism, and human rights promotion. Liberalism came to the fore in the writings of such scholars as John Locke, Immanuel Kant, Adam Smith, and, more recently, modern liberal theorists who have argued

that individual liberty, democratic government, rule of law, and institutional accountability are essential for peaceful and progressive societies Doyle 1986.

Liberal Theory emerged as a response to authoritarianism and overstepping state authority over citizens. The theory states that governments are legitimate if they are able to defend the rights and freedoms of citizens. Liberal scholars believe that governments are required to honor and secure the rights of man.

The theory also states that international organizations and non-state organizations both have an important role in the promotion of democracy and human rights throughout the world. In contrast to realist theory that emphasizes state and military influence, liberalism takes note that political behavior and governance are also heavily influenced by international institutions, civil society institutions, and INGOs.

The theory was further developed by modern liberal scholars Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye, who introduced the idea of complex interdependence. From this view, globalization has facilitated the co-operation of states and non-state actors, making advocacy and international pressure important tools to tackle problems like a lack of respect for human rights and democratic accountability.

Liberal theory has been used extensively in the fields of democracy, governance, and human rights activism. Democratic societies are thought to be more effective at affording protection of human rights, due to the transparency, accountability, public participation and rule of law that democratic institutions promote.

The theory is very relevant in the understanding of the role of Amnesty International in Nigeria during 2015-2023. The organization made regular public reports of police brutality, illegal arrests, repression of protests, and abuses in counterinsurgency operations during this time.

The #EndSARS protest is a good example of how liberal principles are demonstrated. Amnesty International made records on the events of the protests, highlighted victims' voices and called on authorities to hold them accountable. Such activities, such as the demand for government accountability to citizens and its adherence to democratic values, are explained by liberalism.

A second assumption of Liberal Theory is that the pressure of the international community and awareness of the domestic population have an effect on the actions of the government. Amnesty International used reports, media campaigns, and international advocacy to highlight Nigeria's human rights problems and stimulate change.

The importance of international norms and treaties protecting human rights is also discussed. Nigeria is a party to several international human rights instruments such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights. Amnesty International regularly brings these obligations to bear in making condemnations and calling for reform in abuses.

Although it is pertinent, Liberal Theory has been attacked for its overly optimistic arguments about states' willingness to cooperate and enforce the human rights principles. Governments can choose to put a political agenda and national security over citizens' freedoms. In Nigeria, some government officials claimed Amnesty International was biased and interfering in the country's internal affairs.

Nonetheless, Liberal Theory is still very relevant as it accounts for the operations of Amnesty International as a non-state actor in Nigeria, which seeks to hold the government accountable, promote democratic governance, and human rights.

2.3.2 Constructivist Theory

Another significant theory in the study of international relations, human rights, and global governance is the Constructivist Theory. The theory gained popularity in the research of Alexander Wendt, Nicholas Onuf, Peter Katzenstein, and Martha Finnemore.

Constructivists believe that ideas, norms, identities, beliefs, and social interactions, rather than military or economic power, are important contributors to international politics. (Wendt, 1992) As per the theory, socially constructed meanings and understandings shape political behavior.

The international norms and socialization are one of the contributions of Constructivist Theory. According to constructivists, norms are norms of behavior that are accepted and shape the conduct of states and organisations in the international system.

Human rights are considered to be universal values that are encouraged through advocacy, campaigns, and international bodies. Amnesty International and other organisations play an important role in increasing and reinforcing these norms by conducting investigations, raising awareness, and exerting pressure on the international level.

Constructivist researchers, like Finnemore and Sikkink (1998), have identified three phases of norm development: emergence, acceptance, and internalization. Advocacy groups bring new concepts into the public arena and, over time, shape society's views and government policies.

The theory is applicable in the context of Amnesty International's activities in Nigeria because the organization aims to educate the public on issues of justice, accountability and human dignity. Amnesty International tries to promote the concept that in civilized societies, there is no place for torture, police brutality, and unlawful killings, by reporting, campaigning, and engaging the media.

There are significant assumptions of Constructivism in the #EndSARS movement. First, the protests showed a shift in attitudes towards governance and accountability in society. Amnesty International played its part by highlighting victims' experiences and fostering international human rights story.

Constructivism also serves as an explanation as to why governments might change behaviour because of worries about international legitimation and reputation. Amnesty International's reports put Nigeria's human rights record under the spotlight, putting pressure on the government to act.

Constructivist Theory has been criticized, though, for its lack of attention to material issues like economic interests, military power, and political power. Critics state that some governments are not eager to accept international norms if they are not in line with domestic political agendas.

Constructivist Theory, however, remains relevant to the existing criticisms since it explains the impact of ideas, awareness creation, and international norms on governance and promotion of human rights.

2.3.3 Relevance of the Theories to the Study

The study applies the Liberal Theory as the anchor theory because it provides a suitable explanation of the role of international organizations and civil society actors with respect of human rights and democratic accountability. Amnesty International works in the liberal context of advocacy, international cooperation, the rule of law, and the protection of individual freedoms.

Constructivist Theory complements Liberal Theory and describes how Amnesty International affects the public conscience, public attitudes, and international norms related to human rights issues in Nigeria.

Both theories are complementary, giving a full explanation of the operations, strategies, influence, and limitations of Amnesty International in the promotion of human rights in Nigeria from 2015 to 2023.

2.4 Empirical Review

Akinwale (2019) has done a study on Human Rights and Democratic Governance in Nigeria. The study was qualitative in nature and secondary data provided by government reports, newspapers and international organizations. The report found that while democratic governance was in place, abuses like unlawful detention, police brutality and protest repression were widespread caused by weak institutions and corruption. The study finally concluded that changes in the institutions were required to effectively safeguard citizens' rights.

Ibhawoh (2018) studied the role of civil society in the promotion of human rights in the Africa continent. The study, through comparative analysis and documentary sources concluded that local and international NGOs played an important and significant role in terms of awareness creation, policy advocacy and democratic accountability. The study, however, noted two key obstacles: lack of funding and political opposition.

Okafor (2017) examined the activism and reform for human rights in the African human rights system. Historical and analytical methods were used for assessing the contributions of advocacy groups. Findings indicated that organisations like Amnesty International raised awareness internationally of abuses in Nigeria, and faced resistance from the government.

In 2021, Egwu carried out the study of the challenges of democratic governance and human rights in Nigeria from 2015 to 2020. The study employed qualitative content analysis of NGO reports and international publications, which showed an escalation of violations associated with insecurity, police abuse, and limitations on civic freedoms. Indeed, the researcher argued that civil society activism is still crucial to holding authorities to account.

The approach of Falana (2020) was doctrinal legal analysis in his study of human rights enforcement mechanisms in Nigeria. It was discovered that constitutional guarantees were not well implemented, corrupted and weak institutions undermined the constitutional guarantees. The study made recommendations for more effective judicial independence and changes in the security sector.

Best and Kemedi (2020) conducted interviews and used a documentary analysis approach in Nigeria to research civil society and accountability. Results revealed that NGOs played an important role in supporting democratic participation and the awareness of the public, but were limited in their effectiveness due to the government's hostility and the lack of institutional protection.

A report by Amnesty International (2021) on the #EndSARS protests and alleged shootings at Lekki Toll Gate was released. The report was based on witness testimony, verifiable information on the internet, and investigative evidence. The findings indicated that security forces went over the top when dealing with peaceful protesters. The organization called for independent investigations and accountability measures.

The International Crisis Group (2021) analysed insecurity and governance in Nigeria. Persistent human rights abuses were linked to problems such as poor governance, weak accountability mechanisms and insurgency, the report concluded.

2.5 Gap in Literature

The literature on human rights and civil society in Nigeria has widely addressed the concepts of democracy, police brutality, insurgency, corruption and the overall function of non-governmental organisations in holding accountable.

There are also several studies that have been undertaken on the issues of human rights and the role of civil society groups in democracy building in Nigeria. However, little scholarly attention has been specifically directed towards Amnesty International's human rights advocacy activities in Nigeria in the period 2015-2023.

Most of the preceding research was conducted on the human rights situation generally, or the operations of NGOs in general without a critical examination of Amnesty International's actions, advocacy efforts, successes, and difficulties in the time of the study.

Also, previous works had not adequately considered the linkage between Amnesty International's advocacy and the eventual policy outcomes on police reform, freedom of expression and accountability during protests like the #EndSARS protests and counterinsurgency operations.

Thus, this study contributes to filling this void by examining Amnesty International's involvement in the advocacy for human rights in Nigeria from 2015 to 2023. The study builds on the knowledge gained in the field because it critically examines the activities, accomplishments, impact, problems, and performance of the organization in its efforts to promote accountability and democratic governance in Nigeria.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Theoretical Framework

Liberal Theory

Definition of the theory

The major theoretical approach used in this study is the Liberal Theory which is used to examine the role of Amnesty International in the promotion of human rights in Nigeria (2015–2023). The relationship between international organizations, democratic governance, accountability, rule of law, and individual rights and freedoms in society is the reason why Liberal Theory is considered appropriate.

The main traditions of political science and international relations that developed were Liberal Theory and Realism, with the former spearheaded by such scholars as John Locke, Immanuel Kant, Michael Doyle, Robert Keohane, and Joseph Nye. The theory places great value on the principle of individual liberty, democratic institutions, international cooperation, the rule of law and respect for basic human rights. In liberal theory, the role of political systems and institutions is to serve the citizens' freedoms and justice in society.

Locke (1690) believed that all people have natural rights, including life, liberty, and property, which a government is supposed to protect. Locke said that governments are formed to protect these rights. Whenever the government infringes on the rights of the citizens or exercises its power in an inappropriate manner, the citizens have the moral right to oppose the government. Locke's ideas had a profound influence on modern democratic government and the principles of human rights.

Immanuel Kant also contributed to liberalism by positing that democratic systems of government, constitutional government, and international cooperation among states foster peace and stability among states. Kant believed that societies that are governed by law and respect of freedom of the individual are less inclined to oppress and be violent. He highlighted the need for moral responsibility and international cooperation in ensuring justice and humanity.

The argument of modern liberal scholars like Michael Doyle (1983) is that liberal democratic institutions are more likely to promote the respect for human rights and accountability because they promote public participation, transparency and the rule of law. In democratic societies, Doyle said, the rules and mechanisms established within the system limit arbitrary use of government power.

The idea of complex interdependence was introduced by Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye (1977) to develop Liberal Theory. Based on these scholars, it is not only states which are important actors in international relations, but international organizations, civil society organizations and transnational advocacy networks also shape political outcomes. They explained that globalization and growing interdependence have enhanced the ability of international organizations to impact governance, public opinion, and international norms.

3.1.1 Proponents of Liberal Theory.

John Locke

John Locke is generally considered among the seminal advocates of Liberal Theory. Locke said that people had natural rights to life, liberty and property. He believes that governments are instituted by the consent of the people, and citizens are expected to give up some freedoms

in their exchange for order and protection. The powers of the government, however, depend on its capacity to ensure the citizens' rights and welfare.

Locke was strongly against any kind of arbitrary rule or misuse of state power. He insisted that if the governments do not protect their citizens, citizens have the right to resist and want reform. The principle is of great relevance in the context of modern human rights work, as Amnesty challenges governments and institutions that are accused of violating the rights of citizens.

Immanuel Kant

Immanuel Kant's concepts on democratic peace, constitutional governance, and international cooperation have been of significant contribution to Liberal Theory. Kant said that governments that respect the rights and freedoms of individuals can guarantee "peace and justice." He felt that democratic societies, based on the rule of law and constitutional principles, were more inclined to secure the citizens against oppression and abuse.

Kant also stressed international cooperation and the moral obligation and responsibilities of the nations. He said that there was a need to ensure the protection of humanity and justice all over the world through the cooperation of international organizations and institutions. This attitude is what fuels the work of organisations like Amnesty International, which work trans-nationally to raise awareness and call for the protection of human rights.

Michael Doyle

Michael Doyle built on Liberal Theory by making the connection between liberal democracy and peaceful government. Doyle said that democratic societies are generally associated with accountability, rule of law, transparency and respect for individual rights. He insisted that

democratic institutions help to curtail the misuse of power, as governments are subject to citizens' calls to action through elections, legislation and public scrutiny.

Doyle's view is relevant to this study because Amnesty International promotes accountability through democracy and institutional reform in the governance system in Nigeria. The organization aims to uncover abuses and promote adherence to democratic ideals through investigations, campaigns and reports.

It has been used by Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye.

The notion of complex interdependence was introduced into Liberal Theory by Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye. International relations are characterized by several players – states, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, media institutions, and civil society organizations – they said.

These scholars say that the international organizations and transnational advocacy groups have an impact on governance, through diplomacy, public awareness, information, and international pressure. This argument can be used to understand how Amnesty International helped to drive the issue of accountability and the attention of the world on human rights in Nigeria.

The theory also highlights the rise of global interconnectedness and the power it gives to international organisations in influencing domestic governance and policy change. All the reports, social media campaigns, international advocacy, and global networks employed by Amnesty International are based on the liberal premise that non-state actors can shape government actions.

3.1.2 Relevance of Liberal Theory to the Study

Liberal Theory is particularly relevant to this study, since it offers a solid basis to be able to explain the relationship between human rights advocacy and democratic institutions, rule of law, and international organizations.

This theory conveys how non-governmental groups like Amnesty International can provide benefits to society through the implementation of democratic governance and the defense of individual rights as a way of becoming non-state actors. Through advocacy campaigns, investigations, media coverage, and international lobbying, Amnesty International raises awareness about human rights issues and puts pressure on governments to change and provides accountability.

The period from 2015 to 2023 was marked by various human rights issues in Nigeria, such as police brutality, arrests without lawful cause, torture, and the suppression of protests. Nigeria faced a number of human rights challenges between 2015 and 2023, including incidents of police brutality, arrests without lawful cause, torture, and the suppression of protests, which were linked to counterinsurgency measures against Boko Haram. According to Liberal Theory these problems arise due to the lack of democratic accountability, the lack of efficiency in institutions, the misuse of power and the failure to ensure citizens' rights.

The relevance of liberal theory to this study can be well illustrated with the #EndSARS protests in 2020. The protests were a reaction to the claims of police brutality and abuse from the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS). Amnesty International also made a notable contribution to the protests, by documenting alleged abuses, giving victims a platform to speak and calling for security agencies and government officials to take responsibility for their actions.

Liberal Theory embraces the concepts that citizens have basic rights such as freedom of expression, freedom of assembly and freedom from arbitrary violence. Amnesty International's involvement in the #EndSARS protests was based on liberal principles on accountability, rule of law, and democratic governance.

The theory also applies to the case of international pressure on the government. Amnesty International is regular in its reportage on human rights issues in Nigeria and partners with international groups to draw international condemnation to the abuses. Liberal scholars believe that international norms, institutions and advocacy networks can spur governments to reform and meet human rights standards.

Moreover, Liberal Theory has theorized the significance of constitutional governance and the accountability of institutions in the protection of human rights. Nigeria is expected to have a constitutional democracy that will ensure citizens freedom and justice. But it is the continued complaints of abuse at the hands of security agencies that show a lack of governance and accountability. It is for this reason that Amnesty International's advocacy aims to reinforce democratic institutions and promote the rule of law.

Though the theory of Liberal Theory sometimes overestimates the willingness of the state to cooperate with international norms, it is quite suitable for this study because it can well explain the role of Amnesty International used in the promotion of human rights, democratic accountability and institutional reforms in Nigeria from 2015 to 2023.

3.2 Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are formulated based on the objectives and research questions of the study:

Hypothesis One

H₀₁: Amnesty International has not significantly influenced government accountability in Nigeria between 2015 and 2023.

H₁₁: Amnesty International has significantly influenced government accountability in Nigeria between 2015 and 2023.

Hypothesis Two

H₀₂: Amnesty International's advocacy has not significantly improved public awareness of human rights in Nigeria.

H₁₂: Amnesty International's advocacy has significantly improved public awareness of human rights in Nigeria.

Hypothesis Three

H₀₃: Amnesty International has not played a significant role in promoting human rights in Nigeria between 2015 and 2023.

H₁₃: Amnesty International has played a significant role in promoting human rights in Nigeria between 2015 and 2023.

Hypothesis Four

H₀₄: The challenges confronting Amnesty International have not significantly affected its effectiveness in promoting human rights in Nigeria.

H₁₄: The challenges confronting Amnesty International have significantly affected its effectiveness in promoting human rights in Nigeria.

The hypotheses in this study will be examined using qualitative documentary analysis based on evidence obtained from Amnesty International reports, academic publications, government documents, policy reports, and media sources relating to human rights issues in Nigeria between 2015 and 2023.

3.3 Research Design

The study is of the qualitative exploratory research type. The study is qualitative in nature, which is deemed applicable for social, political and institutional issues pertaining to promotion of human rights, democratic accountability and the activities of Amnesty in Nigeria.

Creswell (2014) noted that qualitative research was helpful when investigating and comprehending complex social phenomena, human experiences, institutional practices, and political processes. The method allows for the analysis of meanings, interpretations, patterns and relationships of social realities.

According to Babbie (2013), Exploratory research design is appropriate when a researcher is interested in investigating issues that require a deeper understanding, interpretation and contextual analysis. The exploratory design enables the researchers to obtain a large amount of information from various documentary sources and analyse complex interactions among institutions, organizations and social actors.

The study is a qualitative exploratory design as numerical data would not be sufficient to understand the role of Amnesty International in promoting human rights. Reports, advocacy campaigns, policy discussions, institutional reactions and social changes on human rights issues in Nigeria must be critically examined in the study.

The research is also directed toward complex political and social questions, including police brutality, democratic accountability, institutional changes, freedom of expression and human rights activism. These problems are not statistical problems, but rather interpretative.

The exploratory design also enables the researcher to explore the relationships between the activities of Amnesty International and the reactions of the government in the Nigerian political context over the period of 2015-2023. Using qualitative analysis the researcher can be able to identify patterns, themes, challenges, and institutional dynamics that emanated from the process of human rights promotion in the study period.

3.4 Methods of Data Collection

The method of data collection in this study is mainly secondary data. Secondary data is information that already has been recorded and published in some form and is relevant to the study topic.

The main sources of data for this study are reports submitted by Amnesty International, United Nations documents, publications of international organizations, scholarly journals articles, textbooks, newspaper publications, policy papers, conference papers and online academic databases.

One of the important sources of information are the reports of Amnesty International, as it is the main object of the study. The reports contain comprehensive information on human rights, advocacy, police brutality, counterinsurgency, and democratic accountability matters in Nigeria from 2015 to 2023.

Important documents and reports from international organisations are also included, as they offer internationally accepted views on human rights norms and governance practices. The

Nigerian government publications and policy documents are drawn on to analyse institutional reactions and official positions to allegations of human rights abuses.

It includes media reports and newspaper publications, because they are contemporary accounts of major events like #EndSARS protest, police reforms, insecurity and the public response to Amnesty International's advocacy work.

The method used in this research is secondary data, since the research is conducted primarily by analyzing the history, political, institutional and documentation. Existing records, reports, publications and documented evidence of the activities of Amnesty International and human rights conditions in Nigeria should be analyzed.

Documentary sources were chosen based on the criteria of relevance, credibility, authenticity and consistency with the objectives of this study. To guarantee the reliability and validity of information, priority was given to academic journals, official publications, peer-reviewed articles, and reports from recognized organizations.

The gathered materials were scrutinized, sorted and analysed on thematic issues of human rights advocacy, accountability, democratic governance, institutional reforms, police brutality, and issues facing Amnesty International in Nigeria.

3.5 Methods of data analysis.

Using qualitative descriptive analysis and thematic analysis as data analysis methods, the study was done.

Qualitative descriptive analysis is an analysis technique that is carried out systematically to interpret and explain the information obtained from documentary sources in qualitative research. The approach allows the researcher to examine and analyse reports, publications and

policy texts to derive patterns, relationships and developments on the part of Amnesty International to the promotion of human rights in Nigeria.

In this study, thematic analysis is also used. Thematic analysis is a technique for identifying, analysing and interpreting themes or patterns that arise during qualitative data analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The method enables the researcher to arrange the information into meaningful categories based on some of the important aspects of the research problem.

The documentary materials were examined and categorized according to themes: human rights campaign, democratic accountability, police brutality, government response, institutional reform, public awareness, challenges faced by Amnesty International.

Thematic analysis consisted of familiarizing with the data, identifying patterns, coding relevant information, categorizing the themes, and interpreting the results with the aim of the research.

Thematic analysis is suitable because it allows the researcher to critically examine relationship between Amnesty International advocacy and human rights development in Nigeria from 2015 to 2023.

The hypotheses stated in the study will then be tested using qualitative documentary analysis by looking at the evidence in reports, policy documents, academic works and institutional publications on the influence of Amnesty International on human rights promotion and accountability in Nigeria.

Research Question	Hypothesis	Major Variables	Empirical Indicators	Method of Data Collection	Source of Data	Method of Data Analysis
What roles has Amnesty International	H ₀₃ : Amnesty International has not	Independent Variable (X): Amnesty	Advocacy campaigns, reports, awareness	Secondary data collection.	Amnesty International reports,	Qualitative descriptive

al played in promoting human rights in Nigeria between 2015 and 2023?	played a significant role in promoting human rights in Nigeria. H ₁₃ : Amnesty International has played a significant role in promoting human rights in Nigeria.	International activities. Dependent Variable (Y): Human rights promotion.	programs, public statements, investigations.		journals, newspapers, UN reports, government publications.	analysis and thematic analysis.
To what extent has Amnesty International influenced government accountability concerning human rights issues in Nigeria?	H ₀₁ : Amnesty International has not significantly influenced government accountability in Nigeria. H ₁₁ : Amnesty International has significantly influenced government accountability in Nigeria.	Independent Variable (X): Amnesty International advocacy. Dependent Variable (Y): Government accountability.	Policy responses, investigations, reforms, public accountability measures.	Secondary data collection.	Government publications, Amnesty International reports, policy documents, media reports.	Qualitative descriptive analysis and thematic analysis.
Has Amnesty International improved public awareness of human rights in Nigeria?	H ₀₂ : Amnesty International's advocacy has not significantly improved public awareness	Independent Variable (X): Amnesty International advocacy campaigns. Dependent Variable (Y): Public	Media campaigns, social media engagement, public protests, civic participation.	Secondary data collection.	Newspapers, social media publications, NGO reports, journal articles.	Qualitative descriptive analysis and thematic analysis.

	of human rights in Nigeria. H ₁₂ : Amnesty International's advocacy has significantly improved public awareness of human rights in Nigeria.	awareness of human rights.				
What challenges has Amnesty International faced in promoting human rights in Nigeria?	H ₀₄ : The challenges confronting Amnesty International have not significantly affected its effectiveness. H ₁₄ : The challenges confronting Amnesty International have significantly affected its effectiveness.	Independent Variable (X): Operational challenges. Dependent Variable (Y): Effectiveness of Amnesty International.	Government resistance, insecurity, funding limitations, and political criticism.	Secondary data collection.	Academic journals, NGO reports, government statements, media reports.	Qualitative descriptive analysis and thematic analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter reports on the analysis of secondary data that has been gathered on the role of Amnesty International in the promotion of human rights in Nigeria from 2015 to 2023. Data were gathered from documents and other evidence-based sources, such as Amnesty International reports, publications by the United Nations, Nigerian government documents, journal articles, newspapers, policy papers, media reports, and civil society organisations with interest in human rights and democratic governance.

The chapter uses qualitative descriptive analysis and thematic analysis as per the research design and methodological framework mentioned in Chapter Three. This analysis is based on the assessment of Amnesty International's advocacy work, investigations, awareness campaigns, influence on accountability, institutional reforms and the challenges that were faced in the promotion of human rights in Nigeria during the study period.

In testing the hypotheses formulated in the study, the chapter critically examines the salient aspects of Amnesty International's interventions in Nigeria, such as police brutality, unlawful detention, freedom of expression, democratic accountability, abuses of the security sector and public awareness creation. Particular focus is placed on the #EndSARS protests, counterinsurgency operations in North-East Nigeria, institutional responses and on Amnesty International's relationship with the government of Nigeria.

The chapter is thus structured according to the themes defined by the study hypotheses.

4.1 Testing Hypothesis One

Hypothesis One

H₀₁: Amnesty International has not significantly influenced government accountability in Nigeria between 2015 and 2023.

H₁₁: Amnesty International has significantly influenced government accountability in Nigeria between 2015 and 2023.

To test this hypothesis, the study examined major advocacy activities, investigative reports, accountability campaigns, and institutional responses associated with Amnesty International's

operations in Nigeria between 2015 and 2023. The analysis focuses on the extent to which Amnesty International influenced public accountability, government investigations, policy discussions, and institutional reforms concerning human rights violations in Nigeria.

4.1.1 Amnesty International and Exposure of Human Rights Violations

Amnesty International's work to advance accountability in Nigeria was one of the most significant areas, through investigations and exposure of human rights violations by both the state and non-state actors. From 2015 to 2023, the group has been publishing reports of allegations of unlawful detention, torture, police brutality, suppression of protest, and violations during military operations against insurgent groups.

These reports gained local and international attention due to the ability to highlight issues that may have not been subject of public focus. In reporting instances of abuse, Amnesty International used interviews and eyewitness accounts, digital verification, satellite imagery, photographs and field investigations. The organisation helped raise awareness on the activities of security agencies and human rights situation in Nigeria through these investigative activities.

Special focus was on North-East Nigeria's counterinsurgency activities. Amnesty International has filed several reports of arbitrary arrest, torture, unlawful detention and extrajudicial killings by security agencies in their operations against Boko Haram insurgents. The reports sparked commentaries and discussions in the public space regarding the "trade-off" between national security and citizens' rights.

The organization also reported incidents of police brutality and abuse of power by the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS). The raising of concerns about police misconduct and institutional accountability was further fuelled by reports of extortion, harassment, torture and unlawful killings by SARS operatives.

These revelations put a strain on government institutions to address complaints of wrongdoing. Amnesty International reports were heavily referenced by media and civil society organizations and international actors in their discussions on the human rights record in Nigeria. As such, articles from the organization had to be dealt with by government agencies, who often had to make public statements or launch responses regarding the claims made.

Some of the reports were, however, occasionally denied by government authorities, which also charged Amnesty International with bias and hyperbole. In spite of these criticisms, the

organization was able to keep the public debate on going about accountability and human rights reforms in Nigeria.

Implications for Hypothesis One

Amnesty International's investigative work and publicity over human rights violations helped to grow the public's scrutiny and pressure on government institutions regarding accountability. The evidence thus undermines Hypothesis One.

4.1.2 Amnesty International and the #EndSARS Protests

One of the other key areas where Amnesty International helped to hold the Nigerian government to account are the #EndSARS protests of 2020. The protests became a nationwide protest against police brutality, abuse of power and allegedly human rights violation by SARS operatives.

Amnesty International was very active during the protests, and it has submitted reports to the public and monitored the situation, documenting instances of violence and provoking security forces. The group used witnesses, digital evidence, video and photos to record events during protests.

Some special attention was brought to the issue after the shooting of peaceful protesters at Lekki Toll Gate in Lagos State. Amnesty International published reports claiming that security forces had resorted to undue force against the people during the protests. The reports received a global response from international bodies, foreign governments, media outlets and human rights groups.

Amnesty International's participation helped to escalate pressure on Nigerian authorities for investigations into allegations of misconduct and for police reform. The reports were pivotal in public debates on matters of accountability, police brutality and democracy in Nigeria.

Several state governments set up judicial panels of inquiry in response to the protests and international pressure to investigate police brutality and human rights abuses. The level of implementation was different in each state, but it was clear that they were a form of institutional action, in part driven by persistent advocacy by Amnesty International and civil society groups.

The #EndSARS movement also showed the increasing link between local activism and international advocacy networks. Amnesty International gave the voice to the protesters and linked their demands to the international human rights framework. The organization was

involved in maintaining global consciousness of the situation in Nigeria via its social media campaigns and advocacy efforts.

However, the government did occasionally claim that Amnesty International was instigating public unrest and meddling in domestic politics. There was some dispute over aspects of the organization's reports by some officials and some doubts as to the credibility of these. Amnesty International's active engagement reinforced public pressure for accountability and institutional changes.

Implications for Hypothesis One

Amnesty International's role in the #EndSars protest had a huge impact on the discussion of accountability of police officers in Nigeria, institutional investigations, and international pressure. So, the evidence undermines Hypothesis One.

4.1.3 Amnesty International and Institutional Reforms

From 2015 to 2023, Amnesty International also played a role in talks about institutional reforms and democratic accountability in Nigeria. It consistently urged for the rule of law, judicial independence, transparency, and protection of citizens' rights through advocacy campaigns, reports, and recommendations for policy.

Police reform was a significant element of this. Amnesty International has made many demands for reform of the Nigerian Police Force, notably with respect to accountability systems, human rights education, and disciplinary action. The organization stated that the system needed to be changed and reforms had to be made to restore public trust in the institutions of the rule of law.

The organization also called for “independently conducted investigations” into allegations of “torture, unlawful detention and extrajudicial killing.” Amnesty International encouraged the concept of democratic governance and constitutional principles that would see security agencies held to account through these recommendations.

Amnesty International also called for changes in the areas of freedom of expression and journalists' protection, activists and protesters. The organisation's reports condemned restrictions on civic freedoms and highlighted the need for democratic participation in society.

Promoting international human rights obligations was another very significant part of Amnesty International's work. The organization often urged the Nigerian government to fulfill their

obligations under international treaties such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights.

Implementing reforms was not always consistent, but Amnesty International also played a key role in the policy debates on accountability and institutional change. The organization's reports were often cited by civil society groups, lawyers, academics and the media to promote governance reform.

Many recommendations were, however, hindered by institutional resistance, by political interests, by corruption and by weak enforcement mechanisms. Comprehensive reforms were not embraced by some government agencies and allegations of abuse were not fully accepted.

Implications for Hypothesis One

Amnesty International's advocacy efforts and recommendations for reform had a positive impact on dialogue around democracy accountability and institutional reforms in Nigeria. Thus, Hypothesis One is weakened by the evidence.

4.1.4 Government Response to Amnesty International's Advocacy

The state's response to Amnesty International's operations in 2015-2023 was positive and negative. In some cases, the government did recognize the public concerns expressed by the organization and engaged in some small investigation or reform. Some of these judicial panels set up following the #EndSARS protests were instances of institutional responses that were shaped, in part, by domestic and international advocacy.

Some changes in policing practices and public declarations of accountability were also driven by a long campaign by civil society organizations and international bodies. The Nigerian government responded to the accusations made by Amnesty International to the international human rights institutions from time to time.

But the government was sometimes unresponsive. Amnesty International's reports occasionally came under criticism from authorities, and were sometimes charged with exaggeration, misinformation, or political bias. Some officials claimed the organization did not give due recognition to the security threats facing Nigeria, especially in the areas of insurgency and terrorism.

There have been occasions when security agencies denied claims in Amnesty reports and justified their actions as being in 'national security' interests. These reactions revealed the conflicting views of human rights and state security concerns.

Amnesty's efforts to keep the public informed of matters concerning police brutality, unlawful detention, torture and democratic accountability, despite these differences, were successful. The organization's work brought attention to governance and human rights issues in Nigeria at home and abroad.

Implications for Hypothesis One

While there was resistance and criticism of Amnesty's advocacy, the organization clearly had an impact on the government's responses for accountability and institutional responses regarding human rights concerns in Nigeria. So the evidence supports refutes Hypothesis One.

Conclusion for Hypothesis One

The analysis above shows that there was a significant impact of Amnesty International on government accountability in Nigeria during the period 2015-2023. The organization contributed to raising public awareness and institutional scrutiny regarding security sector abuses, democratic accountability, unlawful detention and police brutality through investigative reporting, advocacy campaigns, exposing human rights violations, and international lobbying.

Amnesty International has been instrumental in the #EndSARS protests in documenting alleged police abuse, raising the voices of victims, and calling for police misconduct to be investigated. The organization also participated in debates on reforms in institutions, rule of law and civic freedom in Nigeria.

While political opposition, institutional deficiencies and the uneven roll-out of reform processes reduced the broader impact of these interventions, the evidence shows that Amnesty had a clear impact on debates and actions in Nigeria regarding accountability, including through the work of its Nigeria National Committee.

Based on the above observations, hypothesis 1 (Amnesty International has not significantly helped to drive accountability of governments in Nigeria between 2015 and 2023) is therefore rejected.

4.2 Testing Hypothesis Two

Hypothesis Two

H₀₂: Amnesty International's advocacy has not significantly improved public awareness of human rights in Nigeria.

H₁₂: Amnesty International's advocacy has significantly improved public awareness of human rights in Nigeria.

To test this hypothesis, the study examined Amnesty International's advocacy campaigns, media engagement, public sensitization activities, digital activism, collaboration with civil society organizations, and influence on public discourse concerning human rights in Nigeria between 2015 and 2023. The analysis focuses on the extent to which the organization contributed to increasing citizens' awareness regarding human rights violations, democratic accountability, police brutality, and civic participation.

4.2.1 Amnesty International and Human Rights Awareness Campaigns

One of the key achievements of Amnesty International for the protection and promotion of human rights in Nigeria was the creation of awareness programmes to educate the people on fundamental rights and freedoms. From 2015 to 2023, the organization carried out advocacy programmes, made public statements, produced reports and leveraged the media to create awareness on human rights issues impacting Nigerians.

The organisation's main work was on a campaign of awareness-raising around issues of police brutality, illegal detention, torture, freedom of expression, gender-based violence and abuses in the counterinsurgency operations. Amnesty International often highlighted the fact that all citizens have constitutional and international rights which are to be respected, irrespective of their social, political or religious status.

Amnesty International disseminated information concerning human rights violations within the country via its publications, press releases, interviews, conferences and online campaigns. The organization also reached out to the public with respect to how to seek justice and accountability from government institutions.

Yet another dimension of Amnesty International's awareness-raising campaigns has been to highlight international human rights norms and Nigeria's duties under international treaties. It made frequent reference to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the African Charter on

Human Rights and People's Rights, and other international conventions when speaking about the governance of Nigeria.

Human rights issues gained more prominence in Nigeria during this study period, with Nigeria's civil society organizations, including Amnesty International, continuing to advocate for the issue. The discussion of accountability, police misconduct and democracy was more prevalent in the public sphere, especially among young people and urban residents.

But, there have been some instances where government officials opposed to the awareness campaigns have blamed the organisation for hurting Nigeria's image in the world. Amnesty International's programme on raising public awareness of human rights concepts and democratic accountability was steadfast, regardless of these critiques.

Implications for Hypothesis Two

Amnesty International's awareness creation and public advocacy efforts played an important role in raising public awareness on Nigeria's human rights concerns. The evidence thus does not support Hypothesis Two.

4.2.2 Social Media Advocacy and Digital Activism

Social media and digital advocacy was also a crucial strategy that Amnesty International used to raise awareness of the public. Social media became big platforms for mobilizing public opinion and disseminating information on governance and human rights issues in Nigeria between 2015 and 2023.

Amnesty International actively used platforms like Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and online news platforms to connect with citizens and spread information on human rights abuses. The organization used these digital platforms to reach large audience, particularly the youth who formed a large percentage of Nigeria's online population.

The organisation regularly publishes reports, videos, infographics, first-hand accounts and updates on the human rights situation in Nigeria. Amnesty International was able to use social media to directly engage with its target audience without solely depending on traditional media outlets.

The #EndSARS protests were a testament to the potential and power of digital advocacy in today's era of human rights movements. Amnesty International has heavily relied on social media as a communication tool in the protests, documenting the events, sharing evidence of

alleged abuses and helping to amplify the voices of the protesters calling for police reform and accountability.

Digital advocacy also helped Amnesty International to raise international concerns on the developments in Nigeria. Hashtags, online campaigns and viral content sparked a lot of conversation across the world about police brutality and democratic accountability in the country.

The other major contribution of social media advocacy was on the aspect of civic engagement among Nigerian youths. The rights and lives of many youth were raised and they were increasingly involved in discussions about governance, accountability and democratic reforms.

But there were also some issues with digital advocacy. The effectiveness of some campaigns was impacted by the spread of misinformation, online harassment, political polarization and sometimes by restrictions on online expression. There were also occasional concerns from government officials regarding online activism and a promotion of instability from advocacy groups.

Social media had a tremendous impact on the ability of Amnesty to raise awareness and mobilize the public to participate in human rights campaigns in Nigeria, despite its limitations.

Implications for Hypothesis Two

Amnesty International's digital advocacy and social media campaigns greatly contributed to raising awareness and civic engagement about human rights issues in Nigeria. The evidence thus undermines Hypothesis Two.

4.2.3 Collaboration with Civil Society Organizations and the Media

Amnesty also helped raise public awareness by working with local civil society, journalists, activists, lawyers and media institutions in Nigeria. These associations helped build advocacy networks and helped to extend the influence of various human rights campaigns throughout the country.

Civil society organizations were critical in the design and implementation of public education activities, protests, conferences, workshops, and advocacy campaigns on human rights abuses. Amnesty International often worked with these groups in reporting rights violations and mobilizing public pressure to change.

Media also was an important medium for creating awareness. The newspapers, television stations, radio programmes and internet sites regularly reported and investigated Amnesty International's reports. This media exposure expanded the access of public to the information on human rights situation and accountability of Government.

Sustained advocacy by human rights groups and journalists brought this issue of investigative journalism and public debate on police brutality, unlawful detention, insecurity and freedom of expression to the fore.

Amnesty International's partnership with civil society organizations also enhanced citizens' role in democratic processes. Campaigns for advocacy to demand justice, oppose abuses, and actively engage in governance discussions were encouraged.

The solidarity between Amnesty International, activists, celebrities, journalists and the youth groups helped to bring about national and international awareness during the #EndSARS protests. This collective advocacy put pressure on the authorities to act on claims of abuse and to undertake talks on police reform.

But, there were and are instances when civil society organizations and journalists were intimidated, threatened and restricted in their advocacy work. There was harassment in some instances of activists criticizing government policies or of security agencies' abuse.

Nevertheless, the efforts of Amnesty International and other civil society organisations and the media had a positive impact in building awareness and democratic participation in Nigeria.

Implications for Hypothesis Two

The partnership among Amnesty International, civil society organisations and media outlets helped to raise awareness and civic engagement among the public on human rights issues in Nigeria. This makes Hypothesis Two less likely.

4.2.4 Public Response and Civic Participation

Amnesty International's actions helped to foster greater civic involvement and public interest on human rights issues in Nigeria from 2015 to 2023. This growing consciousness of police brutality, abuse of power, and accountability of the government by citizens led to greater willingness to take part in protests, advocacy, and public discourse on governance.

The level of public awareness was one of the indicators, as seen during the #EndSARS protest. Nigerian youths of all social, ethnic, religious backgrounds rallied together to call for police

accountability and reform. The protest movement highlighted the rising awareness of the people regarding constitutional rights and democracy.

The public also showed growing interest in justice, accountability, and rule of law as a result of Amnesty International's reporting and campaigns. People were increasingly turning to social media, community forums, and public discussion to voice their concerns about human rights issues in the country.

An additional crucial trend has been the increasing involvement of youth in civic engagement and advocacy. Amnesty International's campaigns helped many young people to have a greater awareness of politics and to participate in governance issues of the society.

Greater awareness also had an impact on discussions in academic, professional, and policy worlds around democratic governance and institutional reforms. The study period was when human rights issues gained more importance in the national discourse.

But sometimes, more citizen involvement led to conflicts between citizens and government. Protests and advocacy campaigns were sometimes perceived as a threat to public order and national security by security agencies. Intimidation, arrest or harassment of protesters and activists occurred in some instances.

Amnesty International's advocacy efforts, however, did help to raise the awareness of human rights and democratic values in Nigeria, as evidenced by the rise in civic engagement and participation in the public sphere.

Implications for Hypothesis Two

The improvement in public awareness of human rights and democratic accountability in Nigeria as evidenced by the high involvement of Nigerians in Amnesty International's advocacy activities, are an indication that Amnesty International made an impact. So the evidence is going against Hypothesis Two.

Conclusion for Hypothesis Two

The analysis above has shown that Amnesty International's advocacy efforts greatly raised the public awareness of human rights in Nigeria from 2015 to 2023. The organising raised the awareness of the general public through awareness programmes, investigative reports, social media advocacy, media engagement, and working with civil society organisations on matters related to human rights violations, police brutality, democratic accountability and rule of law.

Amnesty International's engagement in the #EndSars protests further reinforced the general awareness of the citizens and facilitated their engagement in civic actions among Nigerian youths and civil society actors. It was also able to garner international attention on human rights issues in Nigeria via digital activism and global advocacy networks.

Some branches of Amnesty International faced difficulties with misinformation, political opposition, intimidation of activists and limitations on civic freedoms but the proof is irrefutable that Amnesty International has made a significant contribution to raising public awareness and democratic engagement around human rights issues in Nigeria.

Thus, Hypothesis Two (Amnesty International's advocacy has not significantly led to an increase in public awareness of human rights in Nigeria) is not accepted.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

The study focused on the role of Amnesty International in the promotion of human rights in Nigeria from 2015 to 2023. The study was stimulated by concerns of police brutality, illegal arrest, suppression of protesters, abuse of power, insecurity and other violations of human rights in Nigeria in the period of study. The study aimed to evaluate critically the contributions of Amnesty International to human rights advocacy, democratic accountability, creation of public awareness and institutional reforms in Nigeria.

In Chapter One, background of the study, statement of the problem, research questions, objectives of the study, significance of the study, scope of the study, limitations of the study and operational definition of the terms were presented. The chapter has found that despite the constitutional provisions and international human rights commitments, citizens' rights were still being violated in Nigeria thereby adding to the relevance of international human rights groups like Amnesty International.

Chapter Two reviewed relevant literature relating to the study. The conceptual review touched upon key issues like the International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs), Amnesty International, human rights, human rights promotion and civil society advocacy. The thematic review included a review of the situation of human rights in Nigeria as well as a discussion of Amnesty International's work to promote accountability, issues facing human rights groups and the impact of democratic governance on human rights protection.

The study used the Liberal Theory as anchor theory for the theoretical review. The theory taught about the significance of democratic administration, rule of law, accountability and safeguarding of personal freedoms in society. The study also highlighted the role of Amnesty International as a non-state actor in the fields of advocacy, investigation and international pressure to achieve democratic accountability and safeguarding human rights.

The empirical review involved a review of the previous studies that have been carried out on the subject of human rights advocacy, democratic governance, police brutality, insecurity and civil society activism in Nigeria and Africa. The review found that while many works have been published on human rights, and the presence of non-governmental organisations (NGOs)

in Nigeria, not much focus has been placed specifically on the activities of Amnesty International in Nigeria from 2015 to 2023.

In Chapter Three, the methodology used in the study was discussed. The study was designed in a qualitative exploratory design due to political and social nature of the study. Secondary data collection methods were used, such as Amnesty International reports, journal articles, United Nations publications, media reports, policy documents and government publications. Qualitative descriptive analysis and thematic analysis were used for analyzing data.

The data were presented and analyzed in Chapter Four. The chapter examined the formulated hypotheses by holding thematic discussions on advocacy activities of Amnesty International, public awareness creation, influence on institutions and challenges in Nigeria.

The analysis showed that Amnesty International, to a significant extent, affected public accountability on human rights issues in Nigeria. It has played a role in raising the profile of issues of police brutality, unlawful detention, repression of protest and abuse during counterinsurgency operations through its investigative reporting and advocacy campaigns, its exposure of abuses and by its international lobbying.

The study also found that Amnesty International was active in the #EndSARS protests, recording incidents of abuse, raising international consciousness and pushing for investigations into police violence. The organization also played a vital role in raising awareness in the media, through social media, partnership with civil society organisations and public sensitisation activities.

The findings also indicated that while Amnesty International has done much good in Nigeria, certain constraints militated against the effectiveness of its activities. The problems faced were government resistance, insecurity, political criticism, misinformation, low accountability of the institutions, and challenges in the implementation of reforms.

Although the research found many challenges for Amnesty in Nigeria, the study concluded that Amnesty has played a significant role in promoting human rights, holding government and other actors to account, and creating awareness of the public on human rights issues in Nigeria in the last eight years.

5.2 Conclusion

This study focused on the promotion of human rights in Nigeria by Amnesty International (2015-2023). The study found that the advocacy of human rights is an integral part of democratic government and accountability, especially in societies with weak institutions, insecurity, abusing power and corruption that affect the protection of citizens' rights.

The results of the study showed that Amnesty International contributed significantly to the exposure of human rights abuses, public awareness, discussions on accountability and institutional changes in Nigeria. It has raised awareness on police violence, torture, arbitrary arrest, repression of demonstrations, counterinsurgency practices and human rights violations, among other topics, through investigative reports, media campaigns, advocacy programmes and inter-national lobbying.

The study also showed that Amnesty International's interventions had a strong impact on raising awareness of democratic rights and freedoms among the public. The organisation's participation in the #EndSARS protest helped to sensitize Nigerians and world citizens on the issues of police misconduct and accountability in Nigeria.

The study also found that Amnesty played a role in debates about police reform, rule of law, safeguarding civic freedoms and institutional accountability. Despite the lack of a consistent implementation of reforms, the organization managed to keep up pressure for greater transparency and respect for human rights standards.

The study did, however, identify some political and institutional obstacles that hindered Amnesty International's effectiveness. The advocacy efforts had a diminished effect due to government resistance, insecurity, weak enforcement mechanisms, political interests, misinformation and poor implementation of recommendations.

However, the study finds Amnesty International to be a significant player in the promotion of human rights, democratic accountability and civic consciousness in Nigeria notwithstanding the limitations outlined. The activities of the organization from 2015 to 2023 greatly improved the public debate about justice, governance and the protection of citizens' rights in the Nigerian democratic system.

5.3 Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the results of the study:

1. The Nigerian government should improve institutional accountability measures in security agencies to mitigate the incidence of police brutality, unlawful detention, torture and abuse of power. Independent sightseeing bodies should have the power to investigate allegations of misconduct and to make sure justice is done for the victims of human rights violations.
2. International human rights norms, democratic policing and protection of citizens' rights should be continuously taught to security agencies. These trainings would enhance professionalism, minimize cases of abuse in police or security activities, and help to prevent such abuse.
3. Government to provide an environment conducive to the work of civil society and international human rights organizations, where they are not intimidated, harassed or interfered with in their political work. There should be cooperation between government institutions and human rights organizations to foster accountability and democracy.
4. Amnesty International and other civil society groups should continue to strengthen public sensitisation and civic education initiatives to raise awareness about constitutional rights, democratic engagement and peaceful civic engagement among Nigerian citizens.
5. Media outlets should maintain the trend of investigative reporting and objective reporting on issues of human rights violation in Nigeria. Media coverage that is responsible can enhance public awareness and promote the accountability of institutions.
6. Nigeria's government must implement recommendations made by judicial panels, commissions of inquiry and investigations into human rights to end police brutality and security agency abuses.
7. Structural issues that underlie human rights abuses in Nigeria such as corruption, poverty, unemployment, insecurity, weak institutions and political exclusion should be paid greater attention.
8. International organizations, regional bodies and development partners, continue to support Nigeria's efforts to strengthen democratic governance, judicial reforms and human rights protection programmes through technical assistance, monitoring and institutional cooperation.
9. Democracy and citizens' rights should be encouraged and protected by strengthening and effectively implementing laws that guarantee freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and civic participation.

10. There is a need to undertake further studies on the influence of international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) on governance, security sector reform and promotion of human rights in Nigeria and other African nations.

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