

# HUNGER-INDUCED PROTEST MOVEMENTS AND AGITATIONS FOR POLITICAL RESTRUCTURING IN NIGERIA

**Kehinde Adeyemi Alabi<sup>1</sup>, Abdulgafar Abidemi  
Oloredo<sup>2</sup>, Samson Olaide Olawepo<sup>3</sup>&  
Mathew Koledola Omolade<sup>4</sup>**

Department of Public Administration Osun State Polytechnic Iree,  
Osun State<sup>1</sup>

Department of Social Work, Osun State University<sup>2</sup>.

Department of Public Administration Federal Polytechnic Ede, Osun  
State<sup>3</sup>.

Department of Social Development, Federal Polytechnic Ede, Osun  
State<sup>4</sup>

*alabikehinde55@gmail.com<sup>1</sup>, abdulgafar.olorede@uniosun.edu.ng<sup>2</sup>,  
olawepo.samson@federalpolyede<sup>3</sup> omolademathew2015@gmail.com<sup>4</sup>*



## **Abstract**

This study explores the relationship between hunger, protest movements, and the demand for political restructuring in Nigeria. It aims to clarify how hunger influences protest participation, examine the role of economic deprivation in calls for political reform, and provide policy recommendations to address these issues. Using a secondary research approach, the study synthesizes scholarly articles to contextualize hunger, protest dynamics, and demands for political change in Nigeria. This method offers an in-depth understanding of the factors driving unrest and the increasing calls for restructuring. Findings indicate that addressing hunger is essential for reducing social unrest and promoting political stability in Nigeria. The study highlights the need for immediate and long-term interventions to combat economic deprivation and improve social justice, offering policy suggestions to mitigate hunger and prevent future protests. Key recommendations include implementing policies to alleviate hunger, initiating comprehensive dialogues on political restructuring, and fostering continuous engagement between the government, civil society, and protest organizations. The study also emphasizes the importance of digital media in mobilizing protests and urges the government to use online platforms proactively for policy

communication, citizen engagement, and countering misinformation that could lead to unrest.

**Keywords:** Hunger, protests, political restructuring, digital media, civil society

### **Introduction**

Nigeria, the most populous nation in Africa, has encountered ongoing issues concerning hunger and economic disparity, which have incited extensive civil unrest and calls for political reform. Notwithstanding its status as one of the continent's largest economies, a considerable segment of Nigeria's population resides beneath the poverty threshold, facing restricted access to essential resources such as food, healthcare, and education (World Bank, 2020). This economic inequality has incited protest movements, as individuals articulate their grievances through collective mobilization and demand for systemic reform (Ibrahim, 2017). The swift increase of hunger in Nigeria, particularly in the North-Eastern region, is likely to yield significant repercussions. Given the prevailing hunger and the demands on politicians to effect change, the streets would become untenable for their survival.

Hunger and malnutrition have incited rallies such as #EndSARS and demands for restructuring, exemplified by 'Restructuring Nigeria Now.' The existing gasoline subsidy program has resulted in hardship and famine. Hunger yields repercussions, and Nigeria has neglected the indicators. The prevailing hunger is anticipated to serve as a significant catalyst for the reformation of Nigeria, as the current administration implements further strategies to alleviate hunger. Corrupt politicians reveal their true nature by neglecting their states, while residents lament as hunger emerges as a conspicuous threat to life in their communities. Hunger was the catalyst that ignited the Biafran civil war, Nigeria's most tragic and bloodiest conflict, resulting in profound consequences that altered the nation's history. It is one of the numerous factors contributing to Nigeria's decline, penetrating further as time progresses (Olumide, 2021).

The correlation between hunger and protest is extensively recorded in social science literature, with researchers contending that economic

distress frequently acts as a principal catalyst for civil disturbance. In Nigeria, the convergence of economic adversity and political dissatisfaction has precipitated a series of protests, particularly the End SARS movement, which, while initially centered on police brutality, rapidly broadened to encompass demands for comprehensive political and economic reforms (Olumide, 2021). The protests underscore profound discontent within Nigerian society, where hunger compels citizens to take to the streets and motivates them to advocate for political restructuring to rectify fundamental injustices (Akinyemi, 2019).

Historically, the demands for restructuring in Nigeria have focused on the necessity of decentralizing authority to achieve a fairer distribution of resources and political representation. Nonetheless, the recent escalation of protest movements highlights a transformation in these objectives, with hunger and economic desperation becoming primary catalysts for the pursuit of political reform. Researchers have observed that in areas with significant hunger, the frequency of protests and demands for reform are elevated, suggesting a direct correlation between economic circumstances and political engagement (Ekekwe, 2020; Ojo, 2018). The relationship among hunger, protest, and restructuring is a multifaceted problem for Nigerian policymakers, who must tackle the fundamental causes of economic hardship to attain enduring social stability.

Historically, hunger has impacted protest movements in Nigeria, including demands for political restructuring. Hunger manifests in various forms, including extended involuntary food deprivation, nutrient inadequacy, and lack of sustainable livelihood and access to vital food resources. Hunger jeopardizes the state's prestige among its inhabitants and the international world, prompting responses characterized by ruthless force. Protest movements encompass both peaceful and violent demonstrations advocating for political reform, as well as other manifestations, such as demands for restructuring (Clevenger, 1975). The headlines and patterns within protest movements in Nigeria, particularly during the COVID-19 outbreak, indicate demands for the restructuring of the nation.

Restructuring denotes political aspirations for a reversion to a federal system as established in the independence constitution. The

independence constitution of Nigeria has been criticized for fostering an ineffective federation, attributed to increased socio-political and ethnic concessions. Additional allegations have been directed at Nigeria's existing federal political framework concerning resource misappropriation, resource control, and the socio-economic subjugation of lesser political elites, alongside development indicators that largely disregard the impoverished majority. The resulting polarization of societies into conflicting factions of political elites and their followers poses dangers to national security, the stability of nation-states, and the prospects for international order and peace (Mapis, 2020). Depictions of social malaise and civil conflict, including poverty and violence, have rekindled demands for political and socio-economic reforms. In the pursuit of political dominance over the state or a share of national resources, elite interest groups have marginalized the broader populace due to the socio-spatial neglect by the state and its institutions.

Nigeria, while its abundant natural resources and economic potential, persists in facing extensive poverty and food insecurity. A substantial segment of the population encounters everyday challenges in obtaining essentials, especially food, resulting in persistent hunger and malnutrition. This economic deprivation has increasingly resulted in social unrest, as demonstrated by the escalating frequency and severity of protest movements nationwide. The protests, frequently ignited by urgent issues like escalating food costs or unemployment, have evolved into wider demands for fundamental political reform, including appeals for the reconfiguration of Nigeria's federal government.

Nonetheless, the precise mechanisms by which hunger propels these protest movements and shapes the need for political reform are inadequately examined in the current literature. Although it is acknowledged that economic adversity can incite social unrest, a more profound comprehension of how hunger, as a manifestation of economic deprivation, especially influences the mobilization of protestors and informs their political demands is necessary. The impact of hunger in various regions of Nigeria, characterized by differing socio-economic situations and political frameworks, necessitates thorough discussion. This study aims to examine the impact of hunger

protest movements and call for restructuring in Nigeria. This will examine the impact to which hunger acts as a catalyst for social and political mobilization, as well as the nature of the demands articulated by protestors. This research seeks to offer insights that may guide policy responses targeting the economic and political aspects of Nigeria's persistent difficulties, while also identifying the implications of hunger on protest movements in Nigeria.

### **History of Protest Movements in Nigeria**

Examining the significant events that have influenced public responses to social challenges in Nigeria offers a solid foundation for comprehending recent developments. Numerous rallies against hunger and demands for reform have recently occurred in Nigeria, however these are not unprecedented. Examining the history of previous protests and social movements provides clarity into future developments. In the early twentieth century, the Afemai-led Anti-Native Revenue Tax Movement opposed the punitive local tax collection imposed by the British government in present-day Edo State, Nigeria. The 1937 Lagos Market Women Riot, occurring in Tinubu's territory, was a protest over the excessive taxes imposed by the Oba on women's market sales. During the initial years of independence, demonstrations orchestrated by university students in opposition to the looming devastation of the Nigerian civil war heightened political awareness. The consequences of the civil war also fostered student activism, demands for press freedom, and resistance to the establishment's conciliatory stance towards the Biafran populace. The declaration of a state of emergency in 1966, which annulled the 1963 constitution, resulted in the establishment of a formidable military regime and the heightened repression of basic liberties (Okafor, 2009).

In 1974, the government, via legislative decree, undermined the independence and autonomy of university institutions, and the concentration of power wielded by the head of state extended into the judiciary, prompting the action of the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA). There was extensive development of rival local religious groups, fervent evangelism by evangelicals, the advent of Roman Catholic ecumenism, the rise of Muslim scholarly leadership, and various spiritual conflicts (Okafor, 2010). Nigerians returned to the streets as

civil servants participated in widespread rallies against arbitrary dismissals of employees and the alarming pronouncements of military officials. The demonstration against the military was mirrored by demonstrations from media. The Newspaper Proprieties Decree faced strong opposition from the radical leadership of the Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ). Activists initiated an anti-military campaign and established the National Conscience Party (NCP) to fight elections and thwart the military's intention to promote its political party, the Better Life for Rural Dwellers/Family Support Programme (BLRD/FSP), associated with monetization and corruption. Moreover, protest movements in Nigeria possess a lengthy and intricate history, frequently motivated by a confluence of political, economic, and social grievances. The End SARS movement, which commenced as a protest against police brutality, rapidly evolved to encompass wider demands for structural reform (Oluwaseun, 2021). Researchers have observed that economic factors, especially unemployment and poverty, significantly contribute to the escalation of these protests by intensifying the populace's current discontent (Adesina, 2017). The relationship between economic deprivation and protest is longstanding; historically, movements like the "Occupy Nigeria" rallies in 2012 were also motivated by economic causes, notably the elimination of gasoline subsidies that resulted in a significant rise in living costs (Okeke, 2013).

The protests underscore how economic difficulties, such as hunger, may act as catalysts for extensive social and political mobilization in Nigeria. Protest movement and political reformation in Nigeria, 'restructuring' denotes the demand for the decentralization of authority from the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) to the states, the modification of the revenue allocation formula to benefit states and local governments over the federal government, the establishment of state police, judicial reforms to bolster the autonomy of state high courts, the formation of state houses of assembly for local governments, and the conferral of constitutional authority upon local governments to generate revenue for fulfilling their obligations. Nigeria was initially a federation of autonomous states that united to establish a central authority. Nonetheless, the emergence of military governance in the 1970s altered Nigeria's structure, resulting in the

current quasi-unitary system. This system, marked by centralized control, has led to the exclusion and marginalization of states from performing specific activities within their jurisdictions under the exclusive and concurrent legislative lists. The Federal Government presently governs more than 75% of the nation's revenue derived from oil, gas, customs and excise duties, and various taxes, whereas states and local governments manage the remainder. Each state receives only 13% of its revenue from the Federation Account, and no state is permitted to sell crude oil independently, as all transactions must occur through the NNPC, which is largely ineffective (Adesina, 2017).

Political restructuring has been a persistent topic in Nigeria's political dialogue, especially in reaction to the nation's intricate ethnic, regional, and economic variety. Restructuring generally denotes the delegation of authority from the federal government to the states, facilitating enhanced local control over resources and governance (Osaghae, 1995). Proponents contend that restructuring is essential to rectify the disparities engendered by the existing federal framework, which they assert disproportionately advantages specific regions to the detriment of others (Suberu, 2023).

The demand for restructuring has intensified in recent years, especially due to perceived inefficiencies and inequities in governance. This has been further intensified by economic crises, such as those resulting from volatile oil prices, which have underscored the necessity for a more equal allocation of resources (Akinyemi, 2019). The restructuring discourse is intricately linked to matters of resource governance, political representation, and social equity, rendering it a vital topic in the dialogue over Nigeria's future. The Nigerian government must address the numerous challenges, frustrations, and injustices that underpin these movements or calls. Significant reform measures or transformation efforts aimed at rectifying injustices, primarily promoted by various movements, are also examined to elucidate the essence of the reforms or transformations intended in each case. Protest movements or agitations for restructuring are significant responses to the hunger and hardship intentionally inflicted on specific parts of the Nigerian population. Most protest movements or calls for reform are linked to gross, unreasonable, and unacceptable injustices. Certain protests, as expressed by their proponents, embody the anguish

and distress of individuals enduring such injustices. No protest movement or agitation can be more legitimate than those founded on extensive humanitarian principles. Rectifying these inequities is essential for any genuine reform or restructuring inside the Nigerian state (Okafor, 2009).

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study will examine the theoretical perspectives of social movement theory, which provide the foundational framework for subsequent analysis (Clevenger, 1975). The term social movement typically denotes a group of individuals with shared objectives collaborating to achieve a common aim. Social movements include a variety of social formations, with motivations that range from reform groups addressing specific issues to radical movements aiming to transform the political landscape. Beyond elite political circles, social movements serve as the primary avenue for a substantial segment of the population to engage in political participation. Such movements frequently oppose established authority and aim to transform the political landscape. Social movements can emerge for numerous reasons. Protest movements frequently arise in response to broader socio-political changes or state actions viewed as detrimental.

Social movements are extensively examined in the Western world, yet they garner limited attention within the African context. In Nigeria, there has been a recent emergence of mob justice, inter-religious riots, communal violence, hunger protests, and armed groups, which prominently reflect underlying socio-political grievances while frequently lacking coherent ideological foundations. The protests, which arise from domestic events and global trends, frequently adopt the forms and motifs typical of Western protest movements. However, they develop within the distinct socio-political context of Africa, significantly influenced by the colonial legacy and the subsequent formation of states. Social movement theory, primarily formulated through Western experiences, remains a suitable conceptual framework for analyzing popular action in Nigeria.

Social movement theory elucidates the emergence, impact, and outcomes of social movements within the frameworks of social, political, and economic contexts. The emphasis is on the capabilities



and interests of social actors, especially movements, as they react to the opportunities and constraints present in their environments. This emphasizes the social relationships that support democratic practices and underscores the common objectives of (radical) social change. Social movement theory offers a foundational comprehension of the institutional dynamics underlying collective action, emphasizing the non-accidental and non-causal elements of behavioral actions. Its priorities motives and structures over individual traits. Social movement theory encompasses various interconnected branches, including relative deprivation, resource mobilization, political opportunity structures, collective identity, frame analysis, and multi-scalar narratives of environmental and economic justice. Protests and demands for restructuring in Nigeria can be analyzed through the lens of this theory. The theory highlights the effects of hunger on protests and demands for restructuring in Nigeria. It serves as a valuable tool for scholars, policymakers, and practitioners to analyze the dynamics of these movements and to anticipate potential positive changes, particularly in the context of rising food prices that disproportionately affect the impoverished population in Nigeria.

This theory elucidates that protest movements are constructed upon public representations of social conditions, particularly where there exists a disparity between prevalent subjective assessments of living conditions or opportunities and the officially sanctioned common evaluations. Political scientists generally view protest movements as collective actions aimed at achieving social change; however, interpretations of these movements vary among scholars depending on their disciplinary backgrounds. This study posits that protest movements frequently seek democratization, while democratization processes can also catalyze the emergence of protest movements, as evidenced by the ongoing protests in Nigeria advocating for restructuring. Sociologists and political scientists frequently examine socio-structural elements, particularly the composition of movement participants. Protest movements are conceptualized as social groups with distinct identities that mobilize to pursue common objectives. In contrast, political scientists emphasize the significance of local or historical context and time-specific conditions that contribute to the

emergence of protest movements, particularly when analyzing events within a single country or specific timeframe.

### **Research Methodology**

This study adopts a secondary research approach, leveraging a comprehensive analysis of scholarly articles to explore the interconnections between hunger, protest dynamics, and demands for political change in Nigeria. By synthesizing existing academic literature, the research provides a contextualized understanding of these critical issues. This approach enables an in-depth examination of the underlying factors that fuel societal unrest, including economic hardships, political dissatisfaction, and social inequalities. Additionally, it highlights the growing momentum for restructuring as a response to these challenges, offering valuable insights into the motivations, patterns, and implications of the ongoing calls for systemic change in Nigeria.

### **Hunger and Agitations for Political Restructuring in Nigeria**

The convergence of hunger, protest, and demands for political reform is a vital topic of inquiry, especially in comprehending the dynamics of social unrest in Nigeria. Hunger, as a result of economic suffering, frequently incites protest movements that intensify calls for political reform (Adebayo, 2022). Academics contend that hunger transcends mere physicality, serving as a potent emblem of structural inadequacy that can mobilize public sentiment and incite collective action (Ojo, 2018). In areas experiencing severe hunger, protests are more prevalent and intense, with participants increasingly demanding major alterations to the political framework as a remedy for their economic difficulties (Ekekwe, 2020). This connection indicates that hunger and economic inequality are not merely outcomes of inadequate governance but also drivers of political transformation. The call for restructuring is frequently articulated to tackle the root causes of hunger by promoting a more equal allocation of resources and enhancing local governance (Ojo, 2018). Consequently, examining the impact of hunger on protest movements and calls for reform is crucial for comprehending the wider socio-political dynamics in Nigeria.

Hunger is a thoroughly examined catalyst for social upheaval (Bellemare, 2011). This link has been extensively examined in historical, social, and, more recently, econometric literature. Food riots prominently appear in historical literature as a catalyst for societal instability. For instance, a succession of food riots in France from 1709 to 1789 is frequently regarded as indicative of the disintegration of the “ancien régime.” The Parisian populace rioted not to topple the government, but to compel farmers, merchants, and dealers to lower food prices. A substantial body of sociological literature exists regarding food riots. In a seminal study, Walton and Seddon examined 146 food riots across 39 nations resulting from austerity measures between 1976 and 1992, concluding that these riots were not an illogical reaction to the newly established economic circumstances.

A concise summary of the riots occurring during the 2008 food crisis across 25 nations is also provided. The magnitude and timing are essential factors in the food crisis and the subsequent global demonstrations (Lagi et al., 2011). A significant number of protests were provoked by escalating fuel expenses and oil prices, which surged sharply in early to mid-2008 before experiencing a sharp decrease. Escalating oil prices elevate transportation and fertilizer expenses, commodities local agriculture, and enhance the profitability of cultivating crops for biofuels. All of these variables contribute socioeconomically to the escalation of food prices. Food price inflation significantly increased in mid-2007, as indicated by multiple indices. A complicating aspect in numerous developing nations has been the gradual elimination of food subsidies for essential staples. The significant increase in prices for wheat, maize, lentils, and rice on global markets from 2006 to 2008 intensified the plight of the destitute. Food prices became susceptible to political turmoil.

Food insecurity is escalating globally, leading to discontent and unrest, as the need for sustenance becomes a significant catalyst for riots (Ogunkola et al., 2024). According to Fao (2018), 29.3% of the global population was estimated to be moderately or severely food insecure, while the study affirmed that 10.5% struggled with hunger. Nigeria faces significant food insecurity, which can lead to widespread hunger among its citizens. This situation serves as a catalyst for social unrest and protest movements, stemming from the extreme hunger and

poverty experienced by the population. Exploring the interaction between hunger and protest reveals important aspects of an overlooked empirical issue in social conflict studies: the phenomenon of protest movements that appear spontaneously, persist until their grievances are resolved, and subsequently dissipate without ongoing mobilization of social groups Ogunkola et al. (2024). This analysis investigates the historical trajectories of protest movements in various Nigerian states in response to rising food prices and demands for the restructuring of the Nigerian state, prompted by the exacerbation of hunger due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Orjiakor et al., 2023). Food production planning constitutes a significant aspect of governmental strategy, highlighting the priority assigned to the advancement of the agricultural sector and the assurance of food supply and security. Due to the inherent delay and unpredictability between planting and harvest, it is essential that food production planning occurs prior to making cropping decisions. Food insecurity, as defined by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO, 2017), refers to a condition where a household is unable to access sufficient food to satisfy basic nutritional requirements. This issue is multidimensional, encompassing the continuous availability of food, both physical and economic access to food, appropriate food handling and utilization, as well as a satisfactory sanitary environment and healthcare. Nigeria is among the African nations facing increasing issues of hunger and malnutrition. Despite significant advancements in food production, hunger and malnutrition persist as enduring challenges for the country. Increases in food production have had minimal impact owing to high rates of population growth and urbanization, escalating poverty and income disparities, inadequate distribution channels and infrastructure, as well as educational and socio-economic factors influencing food purchasing power and dietary preferences. The interplay of fragile institutions, prolonged conflicts, and increasing hostility, compounded by advancing climate change and economic shocks, raises significant concerns regarding the impact on food security (Ogunkola et al., 2024).

The problem of hunger is complex and frequently affected by several circumstances. These dimensions encompass politics, economics, technology, sociology, geography, and culture. This paper examines the critical elements contributing to the increasing hunger in

Nigeria and the need for restructuring. Socioeconomic and political factors of hunger and public protests have been found. Nigeria, despite its vast arable territory and essential natural resources, remains afflicted by food insecurity, a challenge shared by other nations worldwide. Its annual budget and expenditure on food imports rank among the highest worldwide, although the population experiencing hunger continues to rise. The escalating feeding frenzy of hunger in nations such as Nigeria, the involuntary consequences of inadequate government policy, and the protests by the public are both overdue and warranted (Akaakar, 2019) Hunger is an intense condition of discomfort or debilitation resulting from food deprivation. The process is detrimental, impacting the entire human system and obstructing the progression of the industry. Hunger is the deficiency or lack of food and is not a recent phenomenon; it has a prolonged history in Nigeria, manifesting at various points of governmental administration and corrupt practices. The deprivation of knowledge impedes cognitive development and intellectual progress. Hunger can lead to several detrimental outcomes for the nation, inciting a cacophony of demands for social power and reform. Hunger can incite protests owing to inadequate health supplies in slums, underdeveloped transportation networks, obstructions in toxic waste disposal stemming from corruption, and elevated tariffs on essential goods. This study suggests the following effects of hunger on a society leading to protest movement and call for political restructuring in Nigeria.

#### *Socio-Economic Effect*

The socioeconomic dynamics contributing to food insecurity in Nigeria, including the interconnected factors of poverty, inequality, and resource access, are examined. The assessment of food insecurity in developing nations, including Nigeria, has persisted for several decades. Enquiries have emerged regarding the characteristics and extent of national hunger and food security. Hunger is frequently analyzed in terms of malnutrition, which encompasses both weight gain within a population and the capacity for low-calorie intake during growth (Hossain, N. & Scott-Villiers, P. 2019). Food security is defined as the biophysical conditions associated with a nation's ability to provide sustenance for its population. The socio-economic aspects

of food security indicate the necessity to investigate the characteristics and factors contributing to food insecurity within a nation, as food is a direct result of broader socioeconomic dynamics affecting individuals and nations. Examining these dynamics necessitates that access to food security measures such as food availability, access to food, utilization, and stability be actively incorporated into the assessment of food insecurity in Nigeria (AAkaakar, 2019). The analysis indicates the necessity of investigating insecurity through the lenses of qualitative undernourishment and horizontal inequality, highlighting that vulnerable population segments may lack the capacity to provide adequate food for their groups, either in terms of sufficiency or relative to the national average.

### *Political Effect*

The political aspects of hunger in Nigeria examine the intricate relationships among governance, policies, and power structures that influence the prevalence, manifestation, and consequences of hunger. Analyzing the political factors is crucial for a comprehensive understanding of hunger in Nigeria and its connection to protest movements and demands for restructuring. The regime's politicization of hunger is intensified by the emergence and expression of hunger, influenced by various political ambitions within the political landscape. The distressing images of malnourished children produced by humanitarian organizations raised troubling questions regarding the famine. Failures of regimes in assisting victims produced political consequences.

The issue of hunger became politicized during the conflict, emerging in the public sphere as a significant political concern. News reports, film footage, and the initiation of relief efforts by international agencies raised enquiries regarding the causes and circumstances that permitted hunger to escalate to such catastrophic levels. International agencies expressed comparable concerns. For these groups, hunger and conflict cannot be analyzed merely as technical or humanitarian issues that can be addressed through the provision of food and medicine. Hunger, in this context, is better understood as a manifestation of social dislocation with intricate political origins, which can be utilized as a political tool during civil conflict (Clevenger, 1975).

The prevalence of hunger served as a catalyst for mobilizing collective indignation towards the accountable agencies. Claims for justice were not consistently articulated. Their affiliations were linked to the political discourses of various agents vying to articulate claims, varying in legitimacy, on behalf of the population impacted by the famine. Humanitarian organizations acted as intermediaries between the portrayal of televised atrocities and political developments, often within a binary framework of blame or redemption. Consequently, the regime was deemed significantly responsible for the hunger; television coverage was instrumental in fostering these assertions and positioning the population within the realm of international moral indignation.

### ***Health Implications***

Hunger and deteriorating nutritional deficiencies were identified as contributing factors to several negative health outcomes, including stunting, obesity, diabetes, and cardiometabolic disorders (Akaakar, 2019). The immediate impact of hunger, mostly assessed by food accessibility, seems to exert little influence on death rates among kids and adults. Nevertheless, malnutrition heightened the susceptibility to specific communicable diseases, including mumps and tuberculosis. The interaction of socioeconomic factors with hunger markedly intensified its detrimental impact on mortality. The potential medical morbidity and death associated with hunger over time may still be understated, as the effects of hunger can often modify physiological conditions or increase vulnerability to diseases without immediately resulting in morbidity or mortality (Adebayo, 2022).

The elevated poverty rate and stagnating per capita income will result in adverse health effects, including increased rates of stunting and wasting in children. Climate disturbances, like flooding and severe temperatures, together with wars, will exacerbate this danger. The effects of these stressors are anticipated to intensify, presumably exacerbating hunger in this scenario. Hunger in Nigeria presently manifests in severe forms due to tremendous economic hardship, resulting in a significant increase in demands and protests against the government and its inability to provide a viable alternative. Suberu (2023) asserts that hunger frequently results in diseases, particularly undernutrition. Hunger invariably precedes and exacerbates the

intricate pathways leading to diseases, although does not consistently revert. Individuals experiencing hunger are either in a state of absolute deprivation with no access to food or encounter challenges in obtaining food. Those groups encounter either a deficient diet or no diet at all. Ultimately, they become malnourished, resulting in stunted growth or declining health, which can lead to mortality and many ailments, including obesity, diabetes, and other serious health issues. Nevertheless, the more manageable process frequently accompanies severe poverty, resulting in an adverse environment (sewage, contaminated water sources, absence of latrines) that requires time to cultivate.

Addressing the root causes of hunger and food insecurity in the country is imperative. A multifaceted approach is necessary, encompassing enhancements in agricultural productivity, equitable distribution of food resources, and the establishment of social safety nets for vulnerable populations. Addressing hunger may mitigate a key driver of protest, thus fostering social stability. Alongside immediate interventions to mitigate hunger, it is essential to tackle the root causes of economic inequality and social unrest. The significant correlation between hunger and calls for restructuring suggests that citizens perceive political decentralization as a viable remedy for the inequities they encounter. The government should pursue restructuring initiatives to enable localized governance and resource control, especially in historically marginalized regions. Furthermore, inclusive dialogue on restructuring is necessary, extending beyond ethnic and regional factors to encompass economic justice and equitable resource distribution. Policymakers must collaborate with civil society organizations, protest movements, and relevant stakeholders to formulate restructuring proposals that effectively address political and economic grievances. The role of digital activism, exemplified by the #EndSARS movement, indicates that the government should take into account the utilization of contemporary communication tools in mobilizing protests and influencing public discourse. Effective communication and engagement strategies are crucial for addressing protestor concerns and preventing the escalation of unrest.



### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

This paper examines the impact of hunger on protest movements and calls for political restructuring in Nigeria. The study argues that protests are not solely responses to immediate economic difficulties but also reflect deeper frustrations with the current political framework. A significant number of protesters consider political restructuring essential for addressing the systemic inequalities that intensify hunger and poverty in Nigeria. Immediate action from the Nigerian government is necessary, as hunger has significant implications for the social and political landscape. Hunger constitutes not only a humanitarian concern but also a potential catalyst for social unrest, which may jeopardize national stability. The Nigerian government must address hunger and food insecurity to enhance citizen well-being and mitigate the frequency and intensity of protests. The strong association between hunger and calls for restructuring highlights the necessity of political reforms aimed at addressing the fundamental causes of economic inequality. Neglecting this issue may lead to ongoing instability and increased calls for more significant political reforms in Nigeria.

The Nigerian government must undertake comprehensive policies and programs to mitigate hunger, including enhanced investment in agriculture, focused food distribution initiatives, and the extension of social safety nets. These actions should prioritize areas most impacted by food shortages to avert conditions that precipitate unrest.

The government ought to commence comprehensive dialogues regarding political restructuring, emphasizing the decentralization of authority and resources to facilitate more equal governance. Restructuring initiatives must address the economic problems of various regions and strive for a more equitable distribution of national resources. The Nigerian government must maintain ongoing dialogue with civil society and protest organizations to address complaints before they grow into larger movements. Creating formal communication channels can facilitate the resolution of issues pertaining to hunger, governance, and restructuring in a calm and constructive way. The Nigerian government must recognize the significance of digital media in facilitating protests and should formulate ways to engage citizens online, utilizing these channels to

explain policy, collect input, and counter disinformation that may incite unrest.

## References

- Adebayo, M. (2022) Hunger and the Quest for Justice: The Role of Economic Deprivation in Political Mobilization. *Journal of African Studies*, 45(2), 134-150.
- Adeniyi, E. (2022). 'We're now the Walking Dead': Predatory Policing, Youth Agency and Framing in Nigeria's# EndSARS Social Activism. *African studies*, 81(2), 149-169.
- Adesina, O. S. (2017). Unemployment and Security Challenges in Nigeria. *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations*, 11(2), 23-33.
- Adeyemi, O., van den Bold, M., Nisbett, N., & Covic, N. (2023). Changes in Nigeria's enabling environment for nutrition from 2008 to 2019 and challenges for reducing malnutrition. [ncbi.nlm.nih.gov](https://ncbi.nlm.nih.gov)
- Akaakar, A. (2019). Oil dependency and national food security: A case for Nigeria. Southern Illinois University at Carbondale.
- Akinyemi, T. (2019). Economic Hardship and Social Unrest: An Analysis of Protest Dynamics in Nigeria. *African Political Economy Review*, 12(3), 85-102.
- Chinedu Okafor, O. (2009). Irrigating the Famished Fields: The Impact of Labour-led Struggles on Policy and Action in Nigeria (1999-2007).
- Chinedu Okafor, O. (2010). Between Elite Interests and Pro-Poor Resistance: The Nigerian Courts and Labour-led Anti-Fuel Price Hike Struggles (1999-2007).
- Christian Orjiakor, E., Adediran, A., Onyekachi Ugwu, J., & Nwachukwu, W. (2023). Household living conditions and food insecurity in Nigeria: a longitudinal study during COVID-19 pandemic. [ncbi.nlm.nih.gov](https://ncbi.nlm.nih.gov)
- Clevenger, J. M. (1975). The political economy of hunger: famine in Nigeria, 1967-70 (Doctoral dissertation, University of Birmingham)
- Ekekwe, E. (2020) Regional Disparities and the Call for Restructuring in Nigeria. *Nigerian Journal of Political Studies*, 18(1), 44-61
- FAO and ECA, 2018. Africa Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition: Addressing the threat from climate variability and extremes for food security and Nutrition. <https://www.fao.org/3/ca2710en/ca2710en.pdf>

- Food and Agriculture Organization, 2022d. The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2022. <https://www.fao.org/publications/home/fao-flagship-publications/the-state-of-food-security-and-nutrition-in-the-world>
- Lagi, M., Bertrand, K. Z., & Bar-Yam, Y. (2011). The food crises and political instability in North Africa and the Middle East. *arXiv preprint arXiv:1108.2455*.
- Mapis, G. (2020). *The dietary decision-making process of women in Nigeria* (Doctoral dissertation, Walden University)
- Nordic Association of African Studies. (1999). *Nordic Journal of African Studies* (Vol. 8). Nordic Association of African Studies.
- Ogunkola, I.O., Abiodun, O.E., Umeh, I.C., Tom-James, M., Bale, B.I., Elebesunu, E.E., Oloredo, A.A., Musa, S.S., Adebisi, Y.A. and Lucero-Prisno, D.E.I. (2024). Exacerbation of food insecurity in Africa: A consequence of the dual threat of COVID-19 and the Russia-Ukraine crisis. Elsevier. 2024 June;15 <https://doi.org/10.1016/bs.af2s.2024.07.005>
- Okeke, R. O. (2013). The Politics of Oil and Fuel Subsidy Removal in Nigeria *Journal of African Development Studies*, 10(4), 145-160
- Suberu, R. T. (2023). Nigeria: a model of federalist ethnic conflict management or federalist illusion?. In *Teaching Federalism* (pp. 242-253). Edward Elgar Publishing.
- World Bank. (2020). *Poverty and shared prosperity 2020: Reversals of fortune*. The World Bank.