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RELIGION AS A PANACEA TO THE UPSURGE OF GRAVE INSECURITY IN SOUTH-EAST NIGERIA

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Abstract

The importance of security of life and property is non-negotiable in any society pursuing peace and development. Religion, as a social institution that promotes morality and social cohesion, is crucial in this regard. In view of this, therefore, this paper explores the role of religion in attenuating the escalating insecurity ravaging the country, with particular focus on the Southeast. The paper adopted a descriptive survey design and analytical method and used simple random sampling techniques to select 45 religious leaders from the five states in the Southeast. 3 informants were randomly selected from each senatorial zone, given rise to recruitment of nine informants per state. An oral face-to-face interview was used, while the thematic method guided data analysis. The study revealed that insecurity is prevalent in the Southeast, with numerous casualties and significant loss of goods and property. The study also revealed that many factors contributed to the prevalence of insecurity in the Southeast. These include, but are not limited to, unemployment, poor security network and funding, a shift in value system that encourages a get-rich-quick syndrome, bad leadership, and poverty. Furthermore, the study found that some religious leaders underutilize their platform as a mechanism for promoting peace and averting insecurity. Therefore, this work underscores the role of religion in curbing insecurity in the Southeast, especially via religious leaders and platforms such as seminars, workshops, and conferences. In furtherance, it recommends that religious leaders can actively contribute to mitigating insecurity in the Southeast by advising policymakers on creating employment opportunities and by partnering with the government in entrepreneurial projects for poverty reduction. Lastly, core values such as peaceful co-existence, justice, respect for human life, dignity in human labour, love for one another, and right parenting education should be prioritized.

Keywords: Religion, Panacea, Insecurity, Southeast, Nigeria.

Introduction

The security of life and property is very vital to the socio-economic survival of any given society. Security is the most vital element in human life. Without it, social, economic, and political achievements cannot be attained (Charas, 2015). Nigeria currently appears to be grappling with security problems, and this cuts across its six geo-political regions, but particularly in the North-East, North-West, North-Central, and South-South regions. Residents in these regions now sleep with one eye open (Emmanuel & Emily, 2019). However, the Southeast, which was relatively free from insecurity, has become one of its strongholds. Insecurity in the Southeast is multifaceted, with kidnapping, agitation by the Indigenous

People of Biafra (IPOB), Fulani herders/farmers clashes, while ritualism and Yahoo plus are minor but very deadly.

Beginning from when the late Buhari won the 2014 presidential election, Fulani herdsmen began a deadly attack against their host communities within the Southeast; prominent among them is the killing of over 10 people and over 100 injured in Nimbo, Uzo-Uwani Local Government Area, Enugu State (Nwagbo and Ofoke, 2025). Subsequent attacks on farmers by Fulani herders in Ukpabi, Ugbene, and Adani in the same Uzo-Uwani of Enugu State led to the destruction of lives, property, and, most importantly, they have destroyed the farming activities in the area, resulting in food shortage(Statista, 2022), as many farmers and businessmen/women have migrated while many schools, especially in Adani axis have closed. Similarly, in Eha-Amufu, Isi-Uzo Local Government Area of Enugu State, not fewer than 300 lives have been lost, and farming activities have been halted in many areas. In Imo, Ebonyi, Anambra, and Abia, there is hardly a day without ugly news of killings by one group or the other.

These incessant killings have affected businesses as people can no longer travel freely within the Southeast, especially on Monday, since IPOB declared a Monday sit-at-home. Many vehicles carrying multibillion-naira worth of goods have been burnt because of the Monday sit-at-home, and many lives have been lost (Okibe, 2022). Incidentally, there is almost no single day without an ugly story of loss of lives within the Southeast; the most current is the assassination of a catholic priest, Rev. Fr. Eya, on 19th September, 2025 (The Catholic Herald, 2025). The current worsening insecurity in the Southeast has attracted the attention of many scholars who have thrown up many empirical perspectives. For instance, Ngwoke and Akabuike (2022), in their paper titled "*Insecurity and its implication for sustainable development in Nigeria: The role of religion,*" interrogated how insecurity has affected development in the region using religion as a panacea, while Chukwujama (2024) observed that insecurity is pervasive in the South-East. In the work carried out by Abdulahi and Ozoemena (2025), they agreed that security in the Southeast region is facing its worst state and identified Monday sit-at-home, kidnapping, ritual killing, and herder/farmers clash as the major drivers of insecurity affecting multipurpose business performance in the area. Also, Nwagbo and Ofoke (2025) observed worsening insecurity in the Southeast, arguing that poor leadership style has resulted in a corollary of insecurity in the region.

Therefore, amidst pervasive insecurity in the Southeast and scholars' poor attention to how religion and religious leaders can help to assuage the deadliest problem of insecurity in the region, this paper seeks to explore the role of religion and religious leaders in curbing the opprobrious insecurity ravaging the region. This is apt considering the influence of religion in maintaining peace and tranquility, and most importantly, the paper considers the role of religious leaders in the peacebuilding of any nation. Furthermore, the problem of the upsurge of grave insecurity in the South-East of Nigeria calls for religious leaders to come up with modalities on how to eradicate the alarming rate of insecurity in the geo-political region. It is against this backdrop that the researchers deemed it fit to examine religion as a panacea to the grave insecurity in the South-East of Nigeria.

Aims and the Objectives of the Study

1. Investigate the knowledge of religious leaders about insecurity and, most especially, their awareness in curbing it
2. Catalogue the insecurity index in the South-East from 2014-2025
3. Probe the root causes and nature of insecurity in the South-East
4. Examine the role of religion in curbing insecurity in the South-East

Research Questions

1. What is the general knowledge of insecurity and the awareness of insecurity by the religious leaders in the South-East?
2. What are the major causes and the nature of insurgency in the South-East, Nigeria?
3. What are the current abating measures of security insurgency by various religious leaders?
4. What and where can religion come in the fight against security insurgency in the South-East?

Methodology

This study made use of a descriptive survey design and analytical methods. This method was necessitated by the elaborate research done on religion as a panacea to the upsurge of grave insecurity in the South-East of Nigeria. The sample for the study was 45 religious leaders obtained through a simple random sampling technique from the three senatorial zones of each state (i.e., 9 per state). A breakdown of the sample shows that 3 religious leaders were selected from each of the senatorial zones in a state, giving 9 religious leaders per state, since there are three senatorial zones in a state. Therefore, 9 per state gives a total of 45 religious leaders from the five states in South-East Nigeria. Also, the paper made use of participant observation, in-depth interviews, and Focus Group Discussion (FGD), while the secondary sources of data are books, journal articles, and reports obtained from libraries and the internet. 90 religious leaders were interviewed using an in-depth interview method. Also, five focus group discussions with the religious leaders were organized at Awka, Enugu, Owerri, Abakiliki, and Umuahia with discussants (30 in each case). The interview and discussion questions were structured from the key research objectives to seek information about religion as a panacea to the upsurge of grave insecurity in the South-East of Nigeria. The methods, instruments, and techniques deployed were objective to ensure that the views of the religious leaders were adequately captured. The data obtained were subjected to critical thematic data analysis in order to achieve the research objective. Again, the names of the religious leaders cum FGD participants are pseudonyms to ensure research ethical compliance. A consent form was obtained from both the Department of Religion and Cultural Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, the host Department for the three researchers, and the various denominational parishes of the drawn informants and FGD participants.

Insecurity in the Southeast Nigeria

It is quite adequate to say that security is a major concern in Nigeria, with every geopolitical zone having a fair share of it. In the South-East, there is a pervasive upsurge of insecurity. While Fulani herders remain deadliest (Aniche& Ngwu, 2024; Nwosu, 2024), kidnapping, ritualism-*okite*, yahoo+, human trafficking, and organ harvesting all pose serious security concerns in the region. No doubt, these insecurities in the South-East have distorted development, scared many investors, and many lives, properties, and goods worth billions

have been lost. Between Jan. 2021 and June 2023, about 1, 844 people were killed, and approximately 7.6 trillion was lost through investment, production, and other economic activities (Amnesty International, 2025). In Enugu State, Fulani herders have been linked to several attacks resulting in over 100deaths and more than 400 injuries. Kidnapping, especially along the Nsukka-Ugwuogo-Nike road, is almost a daily occurrence (Nigerian Police Force Report, 2026, https://punch.com/police-foil-kidnap-attempt-in-enugu-kill-suspects-2). There are also many reported cases of Yahoo+ boys killing innocent young girls, forcing some into madness(Lawani & Obazee, 2019), while there are also many *Okite*-related cases where even a pit full of human bodies was discovered at Ezi-Agwu Local Government (Ugwu, 2025).

Cases of Fulani-herder attacks are also found in Anambra, Abia, and Ebonyi states, with thousands of lives lost (Irokansi, 2026) and goods and properties worth 35.7 billion dollars destroyed (Nigerian Bureau of Statistics, 2019). Also in Anambra State, there is a case of *Okite* where a man was arrested with 11 human parts for rituals (Legit.ng @https://read.legit.ng/LTWHO). Many youths were buried alive (Iremaka, 2025), while some were forced into drug abuse (Abunike& Ibe, 2025).

The consequences of these security challenges are many. For instance, Fulani-herder attacks have disrupted farming activities in Adani and Eha-Amufu, destroying the future of Adani rice and scaring many investors out of the area. The security challenges being witnessed in Eha-Amufu are affecting the population of Federal College of Education Eha-Amufu. The population of the students is dwindling. This could be due to the incessant attacks in some communities in Eha-Amufu. Many are skeptical about sending their loved ones there. Many primary and secondary schools in rural areas of Enugu State have almost closed entirely. Similar patterns are observed in Anambra, Imo, Abia, and Ebonyi states.

So many studies have identified many reasons and causes of insecurity in the South-East; prominent among them are highlighted here. Moral decay drives insecurity. Morality, according to Adukwu (2002), states that a morally conscious individual thinks better, acts better, and is amenable to the dictates of conscience by living a worthy life in society and refraining from such behaviour that may be considered a deviation from accepted societal norms and values. This is to say that an immoral being is a social as well as a security risk to any nation. Hence, any little problem people are let loose with grievous effects of loss of lives and properties in almost all the states.

Poor leadership and ineffective leadership are other challenges to peace and security in Nigeria, as a result of corrupt practices among them. The general view of the Nigerian populace is that living standards have continued to dwindle rather than improve because of leadership. The confusion of greed for power, fame, and glory has made some leaders cause havoc among the people and the society. As a matter of fact, the act of corruption is often perpetrated by the educated and the rich who capitalize on their status to create fear and insecurity among the less privileged, thereby exposing them to various temptations leading to corruption and other vices. On this note, Omorogbe (1993) opines that injustice in any society results when the equals are treated unequally, and the unequal are treated equally. Sequel to this, state power is gained, not to provide and care for the welfare of people, but for their selfish interests. And corrupt behaviour and attitude in the management of state affairs have continued to rear their ugly heads in spite of efforts put in place to minimize corruption

through the setting up of some law enforcement agencies like EFCC and ICPC (Akinyemi, 2004).

The problem of ethnic militancy, as well as religious and political intolerance, has created so many crises in Nigeria. The negative activities of these sects, such as Boko Haram, Militants in the Niger Delta, IPOB (Indigenous People of Biafra), Odua People's Congress (OPC), Arewa People's Congress (APC), etc., have continued to undermine national development through violent disturbances, which have resulted in the killing of people and the destruction of government institutions, markets, etc. Activities of these groups hamper the social and economic activities of the people by scaring investors, thereby leading to underdevelopment in the country. Buttressing this, Aghalor (2011) said that any country that cannot provide security for its citizens is sliding into anarchy and a situation where might be right.

Socio-economic conditions are yet another factor that hinders peace and security for sustainable development in Nigeria. Nwosu (2009) disclosed that one of the elements that promotes violent crimes in any nation is the socio-economic order that gives widespread poverty and unemployment among youths. He furthermore said that an environment that creates a tiny minority in obscene wealth and a large majority swimming in abject poverty and degradation can be a breeding ground for ill feelings and suicidal instincts. A socio-economic organization that has a great wide gulf between the haves and the have-nots cannot help but set nurturing ground for evil acts as envisaged in Nigerian society today. Moreover, Ekpeyong (2013) stated that a socio-economic order that promotes materialism as the primary value of the society no doubt fosters common crime, as seen in Nigeria today. Thus, any nation that operates a socio-economic order that fosters wealth accumulation by the political class at the expense of equity, productivity, justice, fair play, and respect for human rights and rule of law must sooner or later experience violence and instability.

Many scholars have tried to investigate the pervasive cases of insecurity and its consequences in the South-East. According to Chukwujama (2024), Olabisi (2025), and Nwagbo and Ofoke (2025), insecurity has destroyed many developmental opportunities, as both investors and actors are afraid of bringing their businesses, leading to colossal losses in Socio-economic activities. According to Udoh (2015), Agunwa & Nwando (2018), Ngwoke & Akabike (2022), and Wachukwu (2024), religion can be used in assuaging insecurity and in creating social stability and cohesion. Therefore, although there exists much literature on insecurity and religion in the South-East, not many have delved into a detailed discussion on how religion could be used in curbing insecurity in the South-East using Focused Group Discussion with religious leaders and actors, hence the exigency of the research.

Results

This section presents some cases of insecurity in the Southeast from 2019 to 2025, in tabular form and with pictorial evidence. The study shows a high level of insecurity in the Southeast. For instance, the underlisted tables are a testament to the above claims.

S/N	YEAR	CAUSES	ROOT CAUSE	LOCALITY	CASULTY
1	2019	**Attacks on Security Agencies**	Pro-Biafra agitation (IPOB/ESN),	Aba, Ohafia	6 People were killed, and 2

			vengeance for the detention of Nnamdi Kanu		security vehicles were burnt
2	2020	**Kidnapping & Armed Robbery**	High unemployment, poverty, the search for quick wealth, and an influx of criminal gangs	Umuahia, Aba, Abia North	A 14-Seater bus was kidnapped, and other passengers ran for their dear lives
3	2021	**Cultism & Gang Violence**	Youth restiveness, drug abuse, struggle for territory	ABA AND UMUAHIA	3 people were killed, and one motorcycle was burnt
4	2023	**Herdsmen/Farmer Conflicts**	Competition over land, destroyed crops, and cattle rustling.	UMUNNEOCHI	Many were Kidnapped, Including The Prelate of the Methodist Church In Nigeria
5	2025	**Unknown Gunmen/Enforcement of "Monday Sit-at-home"**	Agitation against the Federal Government for the release of Mazi Namdi Kanu and enforcement of separatist orders.	Aba, major highways in the State	3 security personnel and one unknown gunman were killed.

Insecurity in Abia State, Nigeria, between 2019 and 2026 has been characterized by a complex mix of separatist agitation, kidnappings, armed robbery, and herdsmen-farmer conflicts. While the state witnessed a relative improvement in security under the administration of Governor Alex Otti (starting May 2023) due to initiatives like "Operation Crush," localized incidents and high-profile attacks have continued.

IMO STATE

S/N	YEAR	CAUSES	ROOT CUASES	LOCALITY	CASUALTY
1	2019	**Political Instability & Governance Deficit**	2019 election outcomes, Supreme Court judgments, and alleged "stolen mandates" led to	Imo and its environs	9 people were killed; the police station was

			deep political discontent and violence aimed at delegitimizing the state government.		burnt, and two police vans were also burnt
2	2021	**Separatist Movements (IPOB/ESN)**	Activities by IPOB and the ESN, including enforcement of "sit-at-home" orders, led to confrontations with security agencies, the killing of security personnel, and arson on public institutions	Osu, Owerri, and Mbano.	6 were killed, and the Osu market police van was burnt
3	2022	**Marginalization & Ethno-religious Grievances**	Historical feelings of neglect among youths in the South East, coupled with perceived agenda-driven attacks (Fulanisation/Islamization claims), created an enabling environment for radicalization	Orlu and Ngor Okpala	27 cattle were killed, and Trucks loaded with goods were vandalised
4	2023	**Unknown Gunmen" Phenomenon**	Constant attacks on police stations, correctional facilities, and security personnel by unidentified armed actors.	Mbaise, Osu, Orlu and environs	Two police stations were burnt, 4 vans destroyed, and 3 people were killed
5	2025	**Kidnapping for Ransom**	Highly organized criminal networks targeting civilians, travelers, and religious figures for financial extortion, turning insecurity into a "lucrative criminal enterprise	Orlu, Osu, Owerri, and environs	Many were kidnapped, and ransom paid.

Summary of Causality Analysis (2019–2026)

2019–2021: The security crisis largely stemmed from political disputes surrounding the 2019 gubernatorial election, leading to attacks on government property and security personnel.
2021–2024: The conflict escalated with the rise of the Eastern Security Network (ESN) and sit-at-home enforcement, resulting in a surge of “unknown gunmen” attacks, kidnapping, and the burning of police stations.

2024–2026: The insecurity has evolved into a "lucrative criminal industry", characterized by sophisticated ransom-based kidnappings, continued killings of security agents, and targeting of critical infrastructure, impacting economic activity negatively.

ANAMBRA STATE

S/N	YEAR	CAUSES	ROOT CAUSES	LOCALITY	CASUALTY
1	2019	**Political Marginalization**	Long-standing feelings of neglect within the Nigerian federation among the Igbo population provide ideological ammunition for separatist agitations	Onitsha and Amawbia	Government properties were destroyed
2	2022	**Unknown Gunmen" (UGM)**	Armed groups are attacking police stations, state infrastructure, and individuals, often in connection with separatist, secessionist agitations (IPOB/ESN).	Onitsha, Owerre-ezukala, Umunze, and environs	8 people were killed, the police station was burnt, 3 police vans were burnt, and several government properties were destroyed.
3	2023	**Cultism & Gang Violence**	Intense rivalry among youth gangs and university-based cults causing widespread violence	Awka, Nsugbe, and environs	5 people were shot dead, and cars were destroyed.
4	2024	**Kidnapping & Armed Robbery**	Commercialized crime where individuals and travellers are abducted for ransom, particularly along major highways.	Along the Onitsha-Owerri road in Anambra	Many travelers were abducted, and a heavy ransom was paid

5	2025	**Political Violence**	Election-related intimidation, violence, and thugs hired by politicians, especially around the last election cycles	Around major cities in the state	Government properties worth millions of naira were destroyed.

Summary of Causality & Dynamics (2019–2026)

The "Unknown Gunmen" Phenomenon: Beginning strongly around 2021, these groups operate with a high degree of impunity, targeting government institutions and law enforcement. Their activities have been observed to intensify during political events.
Politicization of Security: Criminal elements have exploited legitimate demands for self-determination to engage in violent activities.

Failure of Policing: Ineffective policing, poor training, and inadequate equipment, combined with low morale, have led to gaps in security management.

Economic Impact: Insecurity has directly impacted the state's economy, leading to a breakdown of business activities (e.g., Monday sit-at-home orders).

2024-2026 Trend: Continued insecurity is tied to the persistent underlying issues of unemployment, failure to address youth restiveness, and continued weak security presence in some rural areas

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EBONYI STATE

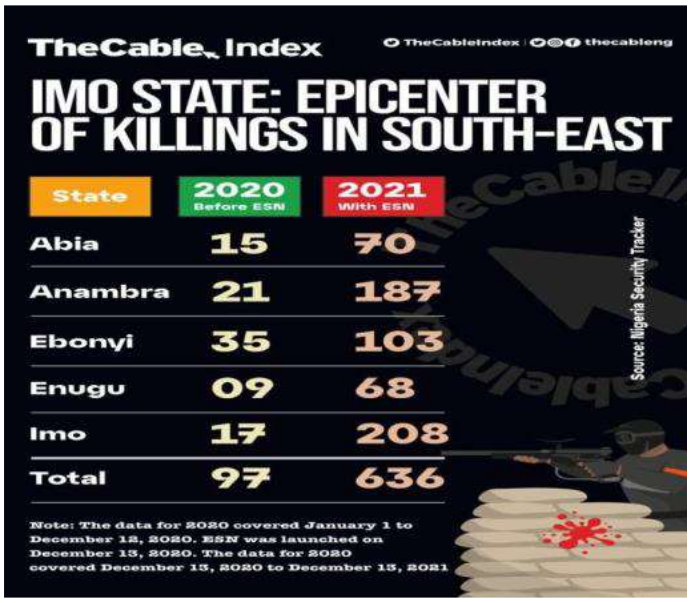
S/N	YEAR	CAUSES	ROOT CAUSES	LOCALITY	CASULTY
1	2019	**Long-standing Land/Boundary Disputes**	Age-long disputes over land ownership (e.g., Ezza-Ezillo, Amasiri-Akpoha, Oso-Edda) remain unresolved, often flaring into communal violence	Ezza-Ezillo, Amasiri-Akpoha, Oso-Edda.	22 People were killed; 8 houses were razed, and properties worth millions of naira were destroyed.
2.	2021	**Secessionist Agitation (IPOB/ESN)**	Violent enforcement of "sit-at-	Abakiliki and its environs	10 people were killed, and 3

			home" orders, attacks on police stations, and clashes with security forces, especially in 2020–2022.		security vans were destroyed
3	2023	**Farmer-Herder Clashes**	Violent conflicts over farm destruction and grazing rights have resulted in killings and the displacement of rural farmers.	In many communities in the State	14 people were killed, 50 cattle were killed, and properties worth millions of naira were destroyed
4	2024	**Communal/Inter-communal Clashes**	Renewed clashes (e.g., in Edda/Afikpo South and Ishielu) involving beheadings and destruction of property (2024–2026).	Edda/Afikpo South and Ishielu	9 people were killed and properties were destroyed
5	2025	**Political Violence/Thuggery**	Use of armed thugs by politicians, especially around election cycles (2019, till date).	Abakiliki and environs	Many were feared dead, and property was destroyed

ENUGU STATE

S/N	YEAR	CAUSES	ROOT CAUSES	LOCALITY	CASULTY

1	2020	**High Unemployment**	Extreme scarcity of jobs and lack of industries are leading to youth engagement in cultism and gang-related violence.	Around major cities	Government Properties were destroyed
2	2021	Drug Abuse	High incidence of illicit drug hawking and addiction in urban areas.	Ozalla Igbo-Etiti	A woman was killed by her son
3	2023	**Kidnapping/Abduction**	Prevalent, particularly along major roads, in commercial hubs, and in rural communities.	Enugu and environs	Citizens have been kidnapped
4	2024	**Farmer-Herder Clashes**	Violent conflicts in areas like Eha-Amufu (Isi-Uzo LGA) due to farm destruction, leading to displacement.	Eha-Amufu (Isi-Uzo LGA	12 people were killed by herdsmen, 7 houses burnt down, and properties worth millions were destroyed.
5	2025	**Unknown Gunmen**	Attacks on police stations, soldiers, and public institutions are creating high insecurity.		



Source: Nwagbo and Ofoke (2025)

The above table presents the number of cases between 2020 and 2021. From the table, there were 636 reported cases of insecurity in the South East between 2020 and 2021.

Discussion

What is the general knowledge of insecurity and the awareness of insecurity by the religious leaders in the South-East?

There is high acceptance by scholars and informants that there is prevalent insecurity in the South East (Alao, 2024). Also, based on information arising from research question one, information obtained from key informants shows that 98% have excellent knowledge of insecurity. For instance, the informants know the various dimensions and types of insecurity. Also, research shows high awareness of insecurity among religious leaders. In fact, many of them showed concern about the worsening insecurity in the region and noted that it requires close attention from all sectors. Unfortunately, about 20% of the informants express a dissenting view about religious leaders' involvement in curbing security problems, citing the government as the sole actor in providing security for the lives and property of their citizens. This aligns with the recommendations made by Akpan & Anietie (2024), Alao (2024), thus:

> It was recommended, among others, that religious leaders should be endowed with utmost knowledge of the religious norms and ethics scripted in the religious books, as they would be able to guide their fellow members ethically through précised teaching and guidance, as this would help in directing the behaviour and attitude of the adherents.

Therefore, religious leaders should possess a good knowledge of insecurity and use their various platforms to sensitize their members on insecurity and possible cures.

What are the major causes and the nature of insurgency in the South-East, Nigeria?

The informants identified unemployment, a change in value system that favours get-rich-quick syndrome, Monday sit-at-home, parental failure, improper education, leadership failure, and political thuggery as the key drivers of insecurity in the region. This corroborates

the findings of Chukwujama (2023), who shared that unemployment and get-rich syndrome contribute to insecurity in the region, while Eze et al (2021) revealed in their study that parental failure accounts for insecurity.

Scholars such as Chukwujama (2023) revealed that the nature of insecurity in the Southeast includes armed robbery, kidnapping, ritualism, human trafficking, yahoo+, and farmer-herder clashes. According to the FGD informants and research informants, Fulani militants, kidnapping, and abduction by yahoo+ for ritual are leading the chart for insecurity in the Southeast.

What are the current abating measures of security insurgency by various religious leaders?
Many respondents admitted a lack of effort by Christian religious leaders in combating insurgency, citing Jesus' emphasis on love, reconciliation, and forgiveness, especially for one's enemy, as the major problem. According to them, Christians are not supposed to get involved in vendetta. This aligns with what Anoliefo (2023) observed when he noted that the theology of non-retaliation is affecting Christians from fighting back against enemies. However, many informants, especially the religious leaders, revealed that they mandate their priests to deliver sermons that would encourage honesty, dignity in hard work, and encourage parents to teach their children to eschew social vices and embrace honesty and sincerity. According to them, they cannot engage in combatant measures; therefore, they would rely on sermons and character building. Another effort of religious leaders in abating insecurity in the Southeast is their effort to reopen mission schools on Monday to end the sit-at-home order. They also preached against it, noting that it is crumbling businesses in the region. This, according to the informants, became a model that propelled the governors in the region to announce the end of the sit-at-home. It was also revealed that some religious leaders had persuaded the government to end the sit-at-home order.

What and where can religious leaders come in the fight against security insurgency in the South-East?
Many respondents agreed that religion can be used in curbing insecurity in the whole world, South-East inclusive. Based on the respondents, religion as an instrument of moral compass can be used in character molding, which can be used to formulate sound moral values among youths who are major actors of insecurity. The study also revealed that religious leaders can use educational programmes, workshops, seminars, among others, to sensitize youths against insecurity. This is because many antisocial youths who are fueling insecurity are products of poor education and/or school dropout. Again, the respondents agree that religious leaders can help to create jobs and boost agriculture to reduce unemployment, which in turn will assuage security crises since unemployment is a major determinant of insecurity in the region. Also, religious institutions can persuade the government to invest in security, mitigate security threats, and influence their policies to ensure peace and tranquility.

Conclusion
Insecurity is a global challenge that threatens life, damages property, and impedes development. In Nigeria, insecurity is prevalent, resulting in thousands of deaths, destruction of property worth billions of naira, and fear among investors. In the Southeast, once considered relatively safe, insecurity has been recorded in recent times due to the activities of Fulani herders, Unknown Gunmen, IPOB, and those involved in Kidnapping, human

trafficking, ritualism, and Yahoo Plus. This has led to serious damage and has hampered development. Unemployment, a change in value system resulting in get-rich-quick syndrome, among others, were found to be some of the causes of insecurity. However, amidst these colossal insecurity challenges, this work explored the role of religion and religious leaders in the Southeast, providing new solutions to the malady

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