

SHIITE'S RESISTANCE IDEOLOGY AND NIGERIA'S SOVEREIGNTY: HOW COMPATIBLE

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Abstract

Relationship between the state and religion can take different forms and dimensions. However, the plurality of Nigerian state makes adoption of official religion impossible. In spite of the foregoing, Nigeria's constitution provides for freedom of religion for all citizens, while the state serves the role of neutral arbiter. Shiite as religious sect, however, has resistance as one of its major ideologies. The resistance ideology entails total allegiance to the leader of the 1979 Iran's revolution, Ayatollah Khomeini or his successor, and confronting any authority that challenges such allegiance. This, coupled with the fact that the major spiritual leader of the sect in Nigeria, Sheikh Ibrahim Yakub Zakzaky, has taken about 40 years nurturing unalloyed, loyal and resolute followers, put the Nigerian state in a dilemma whenever she pushes to stamp her authority on the sect. Often, this leads to loss of innocent lives, destruction of properties and above all disruption of peace and harmony. This paper therefore examines the Shiite resistance ideology and its implications on the Nigerian sovereignty. This is with a view of determining the possibility of the cohabiting of the Nigerian sovereignty and the Shiite resistance ideology in the same territory. Data were collected through Documentary sources and the indepth Interview Method of the Survey Research. Similarly, the Social Movement Theory was adopted by the paper as its guide. It was found that the Shiite doctrine being practiced by the Sheikh Ibrahim Zakzaky is only one out of the variety of Shiite in Nigeria. Again, unless the Sheikh Zakzaky-led Shiite mellow down their resistance ideology and respect Nigeria's sovereignty by recognising the constituted authorities, clashes of interest would continue to occur. The paper recommends, among others, the need for Nigeria to safeguard her sovereignty at all cost, as failure to do so may lead to anarchy and by extension the collapse of the country.

Keywords: Religion, state, Shiite, resistance, ideology, sovereignty, Nigeria