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## Towards National Security and Peace: The Strategic Role of Libraries

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### ABSTRACT

This article is aimed at examining the causes of insecurity and violence in Nigeria and around the world. It discusses the active roles libraries play in promoting peace and security in different countries. It highlights the fact that several threats to lives, ranging from terrorism, communal and tribal clashes, kidnapping, pollution, health, physical and environmental hazards, and economic crisis among others, can be curbed through information and intelligence services. Premised on these, this article seeks to analyze and make recommendations for the promotion of literacy by libraries, build collaborative relationships between librarians and security operatives, and provide suggestions for the provision of current information against terrorism and security of lives and properties. It also seeks to provide current news on terrorism and intelligence services in Nigeria and around the world, and on social and national security for peaceful co-existence in communities.

### KEYWORDS

Emergency management; intelligence services; libraries; national peace; national security; societal security; terrorism

### Introduction

Governments all over the world have the obligation to maintain peace, security, and protection of the lives and properties of individuals and the society. Boyack (2011) noted that “one of the generally agreed facts and the most important single function of government is to secure the rights and freedoms of individual citizens.” In countries where there is incessant national and social unrest, people have, over the years, been instruments of intelligence, information, and security to their respective communities, nations, and neighboring countries. Individuals and groups have also been involved in the maintenance of peace and securities for the communal good.

National and societal security are parts of the major challenges in Nigeria and the world over; the use of information can help wind down the effects of the series of terrorist attacks, intra- and inter-ethnic catastrophes, and religious and communal clashes that have resulted in the destruction of lives and properties. Nworu and Ndulaka (2015) stated that the basic debate for proper operation and effective utilization of libraries’ resources have been to break open the restrictions besetting them. It makes no sense if those meant to patronize and use libraries are perplexed or

terror-phobic. It is very important that everyone in communities recognizes the need for peaceful co-existence, as this will not only enable the easy access and utilization of information resources, it will help to curb disputes and civil unrest, enhance emergency management, and resolve conflict. This article, therefore, attempts to identify the strategic role of libraries in promoting national security and peace.

### Libraries’ role in information provision

Information is used with the aim of improving behavior through new ideas or knowledge extracted from changes and increase efficiency in all of human endeavors and environment (Ajegbomogun, 2008). “To disseminate information, those in the media work tirelessly to know the happenings within and around them in the discharge of important duties. Information is needed at all times by governments and citizens; it helps make them aware of happenings around them. When people are informed they know how to act, what to do in times of crises and how to be more security conscious” (Omonobi, 2014, p. 1).

The emergence of information and knowledge societies is a notable involvement with the potential to ensure that knowledge and information are