

## Crisis-resolution



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A major objective of the Nigeria Governors' Forum is to play a significant role in dispute-resolution at the national, state and local government levels. One of Dr Saraki's strengths was his skill in achieving consensus. This skill earned the NGF a reputation for the effective negotiation and settlement of disputes.

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### The National Union of Teachers Strike

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In June 2008, Nigerian teachers, led by the National Union of Teachers (NUT), went on strike to back up their recurring demand for a formal teachers' salary scale (TSS). President Olusegun Obasanjo had agreed in 2003 to the implementation of the TSS but as of 2008, it had remained unsigned.

The intervention of the NGF in 2008 was pivotal in resolving the crisis and averting further strike action. The NGF was also involved in resolving further strike action by the NUT a year later caused by the states' failure to implement the TSS.

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### The Plateau State Crisis

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The Forum was also involved in resolving the crisis in Plateau State. Since 2001, the state has witnessed persistent settler-indigene conflict over claim to resources, land and power. This crisis between January and March 2010, resulted in about 1,000 fatalities, the displacement of about 500 persons and massive destruction of property. A delegation of governors led by its Chairman, Dr Saraki, visited the affected areas in an effort to learn first hand the nature of the crisis and commiserate with the governor. Following this visit, the NGF constituted a committee to review the immediate and remote causes of the crisis and proffer recommendations. Members also made financial contributions towards providing relief to the displaced.



“Perhaps the greatest achievement of the Forum in keeping Nigeria together was the Doctrine of Necessity.” *Asishana Okauru, Director General, NGF*

“Many people give credit to the National Assembly for so many things, but even the Doctrine of Necessity started from the NGF.”

*Dr. Mu'azu Babangida Aliyu, Governor of Niger State, 2007–2015*

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### The Doctrine of Necessity: The Role of the NGF

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A major achievement of the Nigeria Governors' Forum was its successful intervention in the assumption of power by the then vice-president Goodluck Jonathan when a constitutional crisis ensued.

In 2009, President Umar Yar'Adua was indisposed and had to be flown abroad when he could not execute his duties. The country practically grounded to a halt. For the vice-president to succeed the president, the constitution provides that the president ought to transmit a letter to the National Assembly indicating that he would be unable to discharge his functions as president for a period and that in his absence, the vice-president would act as president.

With the country drifting towards anarchy and with almost no form of governance and leadership at the centre, Dr Saraki stepped in and worked with the National Assembly to produce a well-thought-out resolution to restore stability. They devised the Doctrine of Necessity, which was passed by the National Assembly with the NGF working all-out behind the scenes to push it through over one long night. In essence, the Doctrine of Necessity allows the vice-president to take over as the acting president until the president returns. And it was the action of the NGF in urging the National Assembly to rise to the challenge that made sure it became law. It was one of the greatest moments in the NGF's history, and especially for Dr Saraki.