



RESTRUCTURING THE SECURITY SYSTEM: PANACEA FOR PEACE, SUSTAINABLE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

By

Adewara, Tajudeen Zubair*

&

Abdulwahid, Abdulra'uf**

Abstract

In recognition of the importance of peace and security and prevalence of Crime and criminality in our environment in particular and in Nigeria in general, it is obvious that no country can develop without standard and adequate management of their security system, the success of the citizen in any country is based on the security of life and property of the average man in that country. It is as a result of this that this paper examines the security system in Nigeria with a view to discovering the structural defects affecting the operation of the security in Nigeria. The paper traces the background of the security system in Nigeria from the indigenous to the present policing structure and how it manages it. It adopts a content analysis of both primary and secondary sources to justify the restructuring of security system and analysis the argument for and against the creation of state police and its importance for the attainment of peace, security and sustainable development in Nigeria. The paper discloses that the present structure of the Nigerian security system needs a holistic structural reform for it to compete with the international standard. It concludes that setting a standard structure for the security system in Nigeria, will go a long way in the promotion of economic development and achieving sustainable development goal.

Keywords: Sustainability, Restructuring, Security, Peace, Growth, Crime.

1.0: INTRODUCTION

This study under review attempts to examine the scope of security system in Nigeria with a view to appreciating its structural organisation and its level of commitment to the objectives of which it was established. The achievement of each organisation is based on the well-being of such organisation and the success of the end result of which it was established, the effectiveness of its apparatus to achieve the desired objectives of the government and the people of which it was



established to serve. In this paper, I will discuss the meaning of security by providing various definitions by scholars, the origin of police in Nigeria right from the colonials till date, the Native police, agitation for restructuring of police force, argument for and against creation of state police, reasons for security challenges in the country and concluded that unless and until the police is restructured, the agitation for peace and security of the country might be a mirage.

However, some writers observed that there is no acceptable definition of security, but every writer always provides their own definition according to their level of understanding of the circumstances. Therefore the term security remains ambiguous, despite of our understanding of the simple common definition of security as freedom from any apprehension either from the military or political angle. Its meaning has been expanded to include inter alia economic and environment of a given state or nation. It includes the ability of a country to secure and preserve its physical territory against any internal and external aggressions, maintains its economic relations with other comity of nations and preserves its integrity and institutions.¹

Security is considered in some Quarters as feeling save from danger and harm or an atmosphere of being protected and having values which is preserved without any form of threats in acquiring such values.² It is also put as a condition of human existence and survivals.

In a similar vein, security is regarded as freedom from danger or threat of danger to an individual person or to a nation. It is also defined as an ability to protect one-self from inherent danger which can inhibit individual or a nation well-being.³

* Ph.D. Department of Islamic Law, Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin, Nigeria. e-mail: adewaralaw2003@yahoo.com, ztadewara@alhikmah.edu.ng. Phone +2348035134578

** LL.M, Department of Islamic Law, Alhikmah University, Ilorin, Nigeria. e-mail: mufitirally@gmail.com Phone +2348137203384

¹ Nwaguogu c. Ononogbu A.O (2014) National Security and Sustainable Economic Development in Nigeria since 1999: implication for the Vision 20:2020 Journal of Education and social research MCSER Publishing Italy 4

² Genyi, G. Euginia, M. (2013) Good governance: Antidote for peace and security in Nigeria *European Journal of bussiness and sciences* 2 <http://www.wher.ejbss.com/recent.aspx>

³ Mijah, B.E (2007) Democracy, internal security and the challenges of policing in Nigeria International Conference trangelische Akademie Loccum Berlin



In other words National security is defined as a process of securing the territory of a state and its population with a policy of preserving its existence.⁴ It is also defined as a whole measurement used for the welfare of a future of a nation which affect the economic and social well-being of the population as well as protection of both internal and external aggression. Security is also seen as total protection from danger, harm and threat to lives and properties, resources and other valuable materials which is significant to human existence.⁵

Conceptually, security system has been observed to be of two major approaches, the first is that of the neo-realist who categorised security system as primary duties and responsibilities of the state, while the second approach are the post-modernist who categorises the security as responsibilities of non-state actors with argument that security goes beyond the military intervention in the protection of state but what the government need to do is to secure the economic condition of the people which its absence always result to insecurity.⁶

2.0: POLICING SYSTEM

Policing is defined as a system of provision and guaranteeing the encouragement of law and order in a particular society. It also connotes the enforcement of law, prevention of crime and security of lives and properties of the average citizen in a society.⁷ Police is always seen as organisation that was saddled with the provision of domestic security in most societies including Nigeria. The work of this organisation is to inter-alia ensures that the safety, orderliness and security of lives and properties in any given society is guaranteed.⁸

However, recently, many countries including Nigeria have seen the increasing sophistication of crime which reduced the efficacy of traditional policing system with attendant necessity for

⁴ Ibrahim, A.H. (2013) Issue in security, good governance and its challenges to economic growth and development *Mediterranean Journal of Social Science* 4 <https://doi.org/10.5901/mjss2013.v4n13p187>

⁵ Adebisi K.S. Oyewo,O.U (2015) Prisons and security challenges in a democratic Nigeria *Research on humanities and social sciences*. 5

⁶ Ewetan, O.O, Urhie,E. (2014) Insecurity and socio-economic development in Nigeria *Journal of sustainable development studies* 5

⁷ Mijah, B.E (n 3)

⁸ Ibid.



modernisation and restructuring the policing system in Nigeria. This development if carried out would entail new philosophies, new models and new methods of policing in our society.⁹

2.1.0: HISTORICAL ORIGIN OF POLICE IN NIGERIA

The origin of police in Nigeria could be traced to 1861 when the British first settled in Lagos. The then Governor General established a first police force of 30-person consular guard under his authority called Hausa- Constabulary. This was the beginning of police in the history of Lagos as well as territory now known as Nigeria.¹⁰ This development was made possible by the then governor of Lagos colony called Mc Coskry, thereafter the first commissioner of Police was appointed in 1896 to oversee the affairs of constabulary of Lagos colony. However, previously in 1886 the Royal Niger Company established Royal Niger Constabulary for the Northern territories; this is done in order to advance the commercial interest on the territories of colony and protectorates.¹¹

Adedeji¹² posited that police has been used by the colonialist as an instrument of oppression as early as 1865 when the ‘armed Hausa police was used to attack Egba and Edinmo Villages in present Ogun State for an act regarded as insubordination against the colonials. They were recruited to suppress riot and not to prevent it. This was the reason why education is not a yardstick for recruitment to the police force but physical status, while Aleyomi¹³ concluded that the police as is presently constituted in Nigeria is an offshoot of the colonials who designed it to be an instrument for oppression and securing their regime against the indigenous people of the colony and protectorates known as Nigeria.

⁹ *ibid*

¹⁰ Adegoke, N (2014) The Nigeria police and the challenges of security in Nigeria. *Review of public administration and management* 3 *Nnamdi Azikwe University Awka* <https://doi.org/2315-7844>

¹¹ Odikalu, C.A (2014) When did the police become (y)our friend? Challenging roles of civil society in promoting safety and security in Nigeria

¹² Adedeji, O.A (2012) State police in Nigeria: Issue and challenges. *International Islamic University Malaysia* <https://doi.org/2088033>. p.4

¹³ Aleyomi, M.B. (2013) Is state police panacea to security threat in Nigeria? *Afro asian journal of social sciences* 4 <https://doi.org/2229-5313>



However, the constabulary of Royal Niger was spilled into two segments in 1900 which is known as northern Nigerian police force and regiment for the protectorates, the former was taking care of security matters in the colony which was subsequently merged with the southern Nigeria police force while the latter was for the protectorates. By the amalgamation of Nigeria in 1914, the country had two different police forces each for the northern and southern Nigeria. However, in 1930, the colonial administration established the Nigerian police force headed by the inspector general of police as we have it till date only that the regional police had been discarded.¹⁴

2.2.0: NATIVE POLICE IN NIGERIA

Organised policing has been part of Nigerian culture before the advent of colonialist. There were various communities especially in the southwest and northern Nigeria with their local police called the Ilaris and Emeses among the Yorubas and Dongaris among the Hausas in which their duties is mainly capturing the offenders and serving as bodyguard for the Emirs.¹⁵

The native police was given recognition by the ordinance N0.4 of 1916 which allow the native police to maintain laws and order in their domain and also employ any other person in order to carry out their functions effectively. By this practice it become the responsibilities of colonial and native police to maintain laws and order while the colonial police was under the administration and management of colonialist the native police was under the management of native authority, this practice continues until few years after independence when the police was merged as one entity due to the fact that native police was seen as instrument of repression by the politicians against their opponent in which Ironsi who took over the mantle of leadership by coup det'at in 1966 envisaged that native police has become a 'problematic Institution' ¹⁶

Having analysed the origin and establishment of police in Nigeria, it is however Germaine to have recourse to the functions of the police under the police act section 4 N0 41 Chapter 19 of the Law of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1967 provides that;

¹⁴ Odikalu, C.A (n 11)

¹⁵ Adedeji, O.A (n 12) 5

¹⁶ Ibid p.6



The police shall be employed for the prevention and detection of crime, the apprehension of offenders, preservation of Law and order, the protection of life and property and the due enforcement of all laws and regulations with which they are directly charged and shall perform such military duties within or outside Nigeria as may be required of them by, or under the authority of this or any other act.

From the above statutory functions of the police, can we say that police are performing their statutory functions as stated in the act? It is obvious that these functions are not met by the police due to some circumstances which some writers enumerated as material human and external challenges.

Furthermore, the security system in Nigeria is abysmally weak and inadequate; this could be attributed to so many factors which can be summarily explained as inadequate funding and weak institutions. Lack of training and retraining of the personnel as well as lack of modern equipment to fight crime, poor welfare of personnel and lack of man power has been some of the factors inhibiting the security of lives and properties in Nigeria.¹⁷

Consequently, it has been observed in some quarters¹⁸ that police population in ratio of Nigerian population is 1:450, imagine a policeman looking after a population of about 450 people is highly inadequate and fall below every standard set by the United Nations. The effect of this calculation is that Nigerian is under policed and this explained the reasons behind the breakdown of laws and orders and other insecurity problems all over the country which is orchestrated by many factors.

It is important to note that the provision of security has been the primary purpose of government as provided by section 14 (1) (b) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999. However, in performing these functions given to it by the constitution, the federal government of Nigeria delegated the role of ensuring the internal peace and security of life and property of the citizen in the society to the police who in the other word was saddled with the responsibilities of preventing crime and enforcing the laws and regulations of the country.

¹⁷ Ewetan O.O, Erhie,E (n 6) 5

¹⁸ Olonisakin, F. In the line of Fire *BBC focus on Africa* (April-June) P.19-23.



Consequently, the primary responsibilities of the police force could not be achieved due to some circumstances which rendered them as toothless bulldog.¹⁹ However, the non performance or under performance of the police in this situation in Nigeria today is manifestly cleared to all and sundry. Some of this cankerworm which was identified as widespread corruption²⁰ is a clot in the wig of progress in Nigeria; corruption is not only manifest in Nigeria police but in all organisation and parastatals including the federal and state departments.

It was reported that as at August 2013, Nigeria external reserves stood at \$46.98 Billion²¹ while it has been low since then due to embezzlement. Some of the Government officials are not left out of this malaise as some of the immediate past administration were being suspected to have use their position to laundered billions of Naira.²² Amongst the perpetrators of this crime is the wife of the former president of Nigeria Patience Jonathan who was allegedly received N350m which was allegedly transferred to her account during 2012 and 2013 when she was serving as permanent secretary in Bayelsa state which was freeze by the Court.²³ Also, the former Managing Director of Nigeria Social Insurance Trust Fund who was in charge of Take-off grants for Employees compensation scheme (ECS) for ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) between 2012 and 2015 was arraigned for N18b fraud.²⁴

Similarly, the police have turned themselves into extortionist organization which has been so bad over the years that many writers have made various comments about them, they are described as motley crowd of lazy, inefficient, corrupt, uniformed men and women contributing to the perpetration of crimes such as mass killing, intimidating, rape, extra-judicial killings, summary execution and other heinous crime against citizen they are paid to protect.²⁵ It was alleged that the origin of the crisis that metamorphosed into a terrorist group popularly known as ‘Boko Haram’

¹⁹ Adegoke, N. (n 10)

²⁰ Alemika, E.E.O. (1999) Police community relation in Nigeria: What went wrong? Paper presented at the seminar on Role and function of the police in the post Military Era: *Centre for Law Enforcement Education in Nigeria (CLEEN) and National Human Right Commission (NHRC)*

²¹ Aminu A. (2014, July 10) Nigeria’s external reserves rise to \$38.018bn *New Telegraph* p.31.

²² Ali, Y. (2017, November 24) Alleged N18b fraud: EFCC arraigned ex-NSTF MD, Four others *The Nation* p.5.

²³ Nbueze, J. (2017, November 15) Court freezes N350m allegedly traced to patience Jonathan *The Nation* p.39.

²⁴ Ali, Y. (n 22)p.5

²⁵ Adegoke, N (n 19)



started when the police killed the founder of the group in July 2009 in a cold blood.²⁶ In their usual ways, the police are known to forge post-mortem result thereby causing misdirection of law by the judges in their judgment, they also in some instances labeled innocent people as armed robbers who would be paraded on the media while the real criminals working freely on the street.²⁷

However, the major problem confronting the police force right from independence still persist till date, this could be inferred from the word of General Aguiyi Ironsi²⁸ when he was inaugurating the committee for the reform of Police in 1966 he stated that:

There is need for a clarification of the general impression held in this country about the services provided by the department of police and prisons. You will therefore have to examine the factors which have contributed in producing a distorted image of the machinery for the police administration in the minds of Nigeria republic and formulate concrete proposals for correcting any deficiencies²⁹

In other word, poor funding have been identified as one of the major problems of police in Nigeria, since there are no training logistic, arms and ammunition to equip them for the task of facing security challenges anywhere in Nigeria³⁰ and poor salaries.³¹ Similarly, Alemika,³² argued that one of the reasons for the underfunding of police force was the fear envisaged by the military that if the police were armed it may be used as counter coup force during any military intervention. This phenomenon post major threat to the armed forces which inform their decision to make the police force redundant and armless in the internal security assignment with creation of special task

²⁶ Ikeji, A. (2013 August) Extrajudicial killing and police brutality, the way out *The Nation* also available at <http://www.thenationonline.net>

²⁷ Adegoke, N. (n 25)

²⁸ General Aguiyi Ironsi was the Nigerian Military head of State from

²⁹ Adedeji, O.A (n 15)p.6

³⁰Odekunle, F. (2004) Overview of policing in Nigeria: problem and suggestion in crime and policing in Nigeria; challenges and options *CLEEN Foundation Lagos*

³¹ Olurotimi, A. (2012, US to use more balance security strategies to fight insecurity in Nigeria *Leadership Newspaper* p.16

³² Alemika, E.O. (2010) History Context and Crises of the Police in Nigeria' presentation at the Biennial Retreat of the Police Service Commission on the theme, Repositioning the Nigerian Police to meet the Challenges of the Policing a Democratic Society in the twenty-First Century and Beyond, held at the Le-Meridian Hotel, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, November,1-4 2010.



force which consist of army and police personnel to look after the internal security of the country, the task force always headed by a junior ranking officers of army.

3.0: SECURITY CHALLENGES

Lack of adequate policing system has been identified to be one of the major problems of insecurity in Nigeria. Break down of law and order by hoodlums is easily perpetrated due to lack of adequate policy on policing. What happened recently during the 2018 new-year celebrations could have been averted if the police is adequate.³³

It is important to stress here that creating an enabling environment for the youth to be easily employed is one of catalyst for maintenance of peace and security in any society. Utomi³⁴ posited that ‘we are in dire state of strait because unemployment has diverse implications. Security wise, large unemployed youth population is a threat to the security of the few that are employed. Any transformation agenda that does not have job creation at the centre of its programme will take us nowhere’

The security system in Nigeria especially the police should be genuinely and completely overhauled, since the police have turned themselves into official armed robbers by extorting motorists on daily basis despite concerted efforts by successive chiefs of police on assumption of duty ordering dismantling any roadblock on our highways which tend to be ignored over time.³⁵

Recently, Nigeria have been witnessing unprecedented level of insecurities varying from Boko harram to Fulani herdsmen and farmers with unprovoked violence between the neighbouring villages and clans which informed the federal government of Nigeria to budget huge allocation for security in order to fight crime and criminality.³⁶

³³ Onyema, G. (2018, January 2). New-year tragedy: 17 feared killed in Rivers. *Nigerian Tribune*, p. 30-32.

³⁴ Utomi, J.M (2018, January 2) Baggage of 2030 sustainable agenda. *The punch* p. 21.

³⁵ Ebuka, U. (2018, January 3). ‘Official’ armed robbers on the prowl. *The Nation* P.

³⁶ Nigeria-South Africa Chamber of commerce (2016) Security Challenges in Nigeria and the implication for business activities and sustainable development www.nsacc.org/security-challenges-in-nigeria-and-the-implication-for-business-activities-and-sustainable-development



3.1.0: ROOT CAUSES OF INSECURITY IN NIGERIA: There are some causes of insecurity in our society, these could be discussed in the following topics:

3.1.1: POLITICS:

The lingering security challenges have been suspected to have political undertones, that is orchestrated by some politicians who believed that their means of livelihood and income have been blocked by the federal government policies through the fight against corruption. Some of the root causes of insecurity in Nigeria has been link to erosion of value system in the society, this value system according to NSACC³⁷ social, cultural and communal value that is put on the highest regard which includes hardworking, truthfulness, loyalty to individuals and community tolerance, love for others in the society, adequate respect for the elders, diligent obedience to the rules and customs of the society including taboos, abhorrence of bad behaviours such as stealing, illicit dealings, theft, cheating, disrespect for elders are all considered a taboos in the society which the advent of western civilization and modernization have been rendered useless through adoption of western culture.

3.1.2: POROUS BORDERS:-

One of the major challenges facing Nigeria security system is porous border. Nigeria who shares international land border with Benin republic in the west, Niger republic in the north, Chad in the north east and Cameroun in the east. It also share maritime borders with Equatorial genuine, Sao Tome and Principe.³⁸ Phil William³⁹ posited that out of 1,998 point of entry into Nigeria from other neighbouring countries, only 84 borders point were legally approved while the rest 1894 were illegal entry points which always suppresses any apparatus provided by the security agencies to monitor the border from working effectively. Ortuno and Wiriyachai⁴⁰ observed that, past few years have been characterised by increase in trans-border criminal activities such as traffic in

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Osimen, G.U, Anegbode E.J, Akande C.A Oyewole O.O (2017) The Borderless-Border and Internal Security Challenges in Nigeria. *International Journal of Political Science (IJPS)* 3 <https://doi.org/10.20431-9452.0303003>.

³⁹ Ibid. P.2

⁴⁰ ibid



human being, human organ, prostitutions, money laundering and piracy, smuggling and drug trafficking.

3.1.3: RURAL/URBAN DRIFT:-

Another catalyst for conflict in Nigeria is linked with underdevelopment of the rural areas while the government concentrate only on the urban development. The conflict affecting Nigeria is caused as a result of common trends which runs through the individuals, groups, organisation, communities and nations.⁴¹ This common trends emanated from difference of opinions, beliefs, perceptions, views, interest, needs and goals of individuals. They go further to emphasise the prominent among the causes of conflict as endowment of the country with the natural resources which is being monopolised and control by the federal government which is dominated by a particular section of the country. As a result of this factor, is the resultant occurrence of conflict between the government and the militant especially in Niger Delta region like Bayelsa, Akwa Ibom, Rivers etc. Their aims is to wage war against the state in order to have attention of government in their locality which is embedded in a claim by Robert Michels who says ‘the elite have the right to rule but those they govern have the right to challenge how political powers are exercised on them by democratic means. Those who take up arms against the state seeks to reverse what they regard as state oppression or repression.’⁴²

3.1.4: POVERTY/UNEMPLOYMENT:-

Unemployment and Poverty has been identified as another major reason for breeding and escalation of violence in Nigeria as it is a popular saying that ‘an idle have is a devil workshop’. However unemployment breeds poverty while poverty breeds violence and insecurity as posited

⁴¹ Uoro, A.A, Ekpeyong O.E, Effiong, C. (2014) Conflict Management: The Nigerian Government’s Strategies and the Question of Enduring Peace Business and Management Research SCIEDU press < www.sciedu.ca/journal/index> accessed 7 February 2018

⁴² Albert I.O. (2010) Religion, Terrorism and National Security: Untying the Unholy Knot Paper presented at Muslim Lawyers Association Of Nigeria (MULAN) at University of Ibadan (U.I) Nigeria



by Danbazau⁴³ that ‘Poverty breeds insecurity by undermining the capacity of state to deliver basic physical security, legitimate governance, economic growth and social welfare’.⁴⁴

Poverty is a threat to national security as no amount is much to stamp out poverty in any society, he argued further that elimination of crime could be possible by military intelligence and not by ‘Sheer force’ or purchasing weapons to tackle criminals.⁴⁵

Failure of successive administration to address unemployment, poverty, inequitable distribution of wealth among Nigerians always resulted to crime and violence against the state by some group and individuals who by their illicit actions perpetrates various crimes such as kidnapping, militancy, pipeline vandalism, arm robbery and bombing. It is emphasised further that perpetration of poverty in any country would result to unrest, upheavals, violence and extremism.⁴⁶

Development could not be achieved without national security while states acts as a framework for security, it took two dimensions, one is when people have less than what they need for survival while the second is when they have enough means for survivals but it is below what their counterpart had in the same society.⁴⁷

3.1.5: LEADERSHIP FAILURE:-

Leadership failure has been identified as one of the major challenges facing security system in Nigeria since independence. This leadership failure has been linked to problem of incessant power failure and the fact that Nigeria who is the 7th largest producer of crude Oil in the world still imports refined fuel is attributed to be one of the sign of leadership failure.⁴⁸ Therefore one of the major

⁴³ Danbazau A, (2012) Overcoming Nigeria’s Security Challenges Lecture delivered on the 11th convocation ceremony of Igbinedo University Okada Edo State <<https://www.iuokada.edu.ng/files/c/overcoming%20Nigeria%security%challenges.pdf>> accessed 10 July 2019.

⁴⁴ Akindiyo O. (2014) Security challenges and development in Nigeria: Leadership to the rescue? *International journal of academic research in public policy and governance* 1 <https://doi.org/10.6007/IJARPPG101-IL/562>

⁴⁵ Abiodun F. Why Security Challenges Persist by Kwasu Vice Chancellor (The Guardian 27 February 2018) <<https://www.guardian.ng/news>>

⁴⁶ Akindiyo O. (2014) Security challenges and development in Nigeria: Leadership to the rescue? *International journal of academic research in public policy and governance* 1 <https://doi.org/10.6007/IJARPPG101-IL/562>

⁴⁷ McNamora R, (1983) Redefining Security, *International Security*, Vol. 8, p. 126-144

⁴⁸ Leo, O.C (2011) Failure of leadership in Nigeria. *American journal of social and management sciences* <<https://doi.org/10.5251/ajsms2011.2.3.265.271>>



causes of misrule in Nigeria which affect the security system is equated with lack of intellectual training and discipline which will help the leader to understand the purpose of government.⁴⁹

The reasons for leadership failure according to Plato includes approaching the treasury with intention to loot in an occasion where he was addressing Socrates as follows:

Why you imagine that a herdsman studies the interest of his flock and cattle, tending and fettering them up with some other end in view than his masters profit or his own; and so you don't see that in politics, the genuine ruler regards his subjects exactly like sheep and thinks of nothing else, night and day but the good he can get out of them for himself⁵⁰

The position of the plato above well described the type of leadership in Nigeria today which has been failed in their responsibilities and with the resultant effect of insecurity and violence in all corners of Nigeria which include Boko Haram terrorist in the North, Robbery and Kidnapping in the East, Pipeline Vandalism and Militancy in the South and Money rituals in the West.⁵¹

Achebe, states as follows

The trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership. There is nothing basically wrong with the Nigerian character. There is nothing wrong with the Nigerian land or climate or water or air or anything else. The Nigerian problem is the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to the responsibility, to the challenge of personal example which are the hallmarks of true leadership⁵²

⁴⁹ ibid

⁵⁰ Plato(1941), *The Republic*. London: Oxford University Press.

⁵¹ Usoro, A.A, Ekpeyong O.E, Effiong, C. (2014) *Conflict Management: The Nigerian Government's Strategies and the Question of Enduring Peace Business and Management Research* SCIEDU press < www.sciedu.ca/journal/index> accessed 7 February 2018

⁵² Achebe C, (1983) *The Trouble with Nigeria*, Enugu, Nigeria: Fourth Dimension Publishing Co. Ltd



4.0: RESTRUCTURING THE POLICE AND REMEDIES TO THE INSECURITY IN NIGERIA

The term restructuring has become a household name in Nigeria recently, it has continue to gain popularity especially from the political elites who believes that the only way to address the current security challenge is to restructure Nigeria.⁵³ This phrase has been used by various people to mean various things, but looking at opinions of some writers it connotes divesting of power of military force, migration, foreign policies etc from federal government by enabling the states or regional government to exercise such powers.⁵⁴

Various writers has propounded various theories as panacea for security in Nigeria, some of these theories includes restructuring the federal structure of Nigeria, decentralization of Police powers, creation of more security agencies, reduction of unemployment.etc in order to curb incessant security problem in Nigeria. This paper is going to discuss these theories as propounded one after the other as applicable to the situation in Nigeria.

4.1.0: DECENTRALIZATION OF POLICE: Decentralization of police has been linked to creation of State police by some scholars. Eze, argued that, creation of state police is indispensable where the federalism is being practised , she goes further to define state police as the system of policing in the federal system of government in which the state government employs their own indigenous police officers to police their state for the purpose of maintaining peace and orderliness.⁵⁵ Aremu, described state police as territorial policing in which the federating units are empowered to devolve the security operation from the federal to the states or regions. In other words, he posited that state police is where the control of the operation and logistic of police is in the hands of the state government other than federal or regional government.⁵⁶

⁵³ Yusuf A. (2017) To reconstruct or not to Reconstruct: The new Swansong of the Nigeria Elites (Lecture delivered at the 10th Hon. Justice MMA Akanbi at the Faculty of Law Unilorin) 1.

⁵⁴ Abah E.O & Monday N.P 'Reconstructing the Nigerian Federalism: the proposed form and shape, middle east Journal of Scientific Research 25 (7) 2017)

⁵⁵ Eze A.D (2014) State policing and police efficiency in Nigeria. *Research on humanities and social sciences* 4 <https://doi.org/2224-5766-2225-0484>

⁵⁶ *ibid*



However, demand for state police has been a common trend in Nigeria recently due to incessant security laxity and the incapability of police to perform their constitutional role, some argued that creation of state police would bring police closer to the people and bring effectiveness to the police force due to the fact that a policeman who understand the cultural background of the people he is policing, he understands their languages, geographical and peculiarity of the dwellers of that community would made his duty as police officer an easy one than a strangers who could not even speak the language of the community he is policing let alone understanding their cultural and social background.⁵⁷

4.2.0: ARGUMENT FOR AND AGAINST THE CREATION OF STATE POLICE

The proponent of creation of state police based their argument on the facts that since independence and especially the return to democratic government in 1999, the major role of police as crime fighters and protectors of life and property have failed due to incessant crime among citizen of Nigeria ranges from communal disputes, inter-religious fighting, tribal wars and recently Fulani herdsmen and farmers killings in Nigeria in which the police have failed to curtail. The argument is that if the state police is established, it would be able to deal with the crime being perpetrated by the locals since most crime in the community always being perpetrated by those who comes from that locality.⁵⁸

Another factor raised by the proponents of state police is link to the role of Governor of a state as the Chief security officer of such state. The provision of the 1999 Constitution gives the police service commission the powers to appoint the commissioner of police for a state and by proviso to section 215 (4) of the constitution, the governor as the chief security officer of a state does not have a prerequisite power to direct the commissioner of police for any purpose whatsoever without the approval of the president or such minister of the government as may be authorised by the president.

⁵⁷ *ibid*

⁵⁸ *ibid*



This provision above is to the effect that the governor of a state being the chief security officer of a state does not have requisite powers to direct or command the commissioner of police of that state who is De-Jure Chief security officer of the state to do anything except with permission and tactic approval of the president or his ministers. The empty title of “Chief Security Officer of the State” given the Governor is not practicable, as non of the Governor has control over security system of their own state to the extent that they cannot control ordinary constable of police to perform any act without first getting clearance from the commissioner of police of that state, this extend to the army and the Nigerian civil defence Corps.⁵⁹

It was observed further that the need for state police is paramount important but it could not be successfully achieved if the country is not restructured. This is because presently, the money being shared by the various states and local government as monthly allocation to fund their economy are from proceed of crude Oil from federation accounts. However, creating state police would mean that the state is independent and capable of maintain its own police from its internally generated revenue (IGR) and taxes without necessarily waiting for federal allocation.⁶⁰

Similarly, one of the proponent of state police idea Yuguda,⁶¹ posited that Nigeria being a nation who is practising the federal system of government is allowed to devolve powers amongst the federating units which translates to the effect that each state having its own security apparatus different from the centralised security system. The United state of America where Nigeria practised her system of democracy has over 140 security agencies to maintain Law and order in the country with a decentralised security system.⁶² Therefore effective policing in any society is a constitutional one which successive administration has failed to implement due to centralisation of police in the federal government. Therefore, for any security challenges to be tackled

⁵⁹ Onwuka, A (2018, February 27). Why state police without restructuring is dangerous. *The Punch*, p. 21.

⁶⁰ibid

⁶¹ Yuguda I (2018, February 2) Bauchi governor backs state police to tackle security challenges. *The guardian*. P. 7.

⁶² Agwanwo D.E. (2014) State policing and police efficiency in Nigeria. *Research on humanities and social sciences* 4 <https://doi.org/2224-5766-2225-0484>



henceforth, the security system should be decentralised in other to achieve success in fighting crime and insecurity.⁶³

Moreover, another argument in support of state police is based on creation of employment for youth, since majority of youth in any community are jobless which always lead to crime and youth restiveness which creation of state police would curb since most of such youth would be enlisted into police force of that state. The punch editorial in its bid to support state police posited that “with insecurity reaching proportions, well structured policing at the federal, state, local council and community levels will go a long way in putting criminals in check”⁶⁴

Furthermore, it was argued further that restructuring come with fiscal federalism, therefore, it would enable the state to create its own local laws and prescribed the offences in such laws without necessarily waiting for any federal apparatus to test such laws whether it is in consonant with the federal laws, this would enable the state police to work effectively within the local laws which is their jurisdiction.⁶⁵

He concluded that creation of state police is not suitable due to the facts that it has been shown over the past 10 years that attitudes of political office holders in a state to the opposition party is hostile, this is manifest from the local government election which is being conducted by the state government through the state independent electoral commission(SIEC) with all councils been won by the ruling party contrary to the voting pattern in Nigeria is a signal that the state government would manipulate the state police for their benefits if one is created, it is suggested however, that the state government should canvas for the restructuring of Nigeria federalism which will eventually give way for the creation of state police.⁶⁶

⁶³ *ibid*

⁶⁴ Editorial (2018, February 14) APC panel report on restructuring. *The punch* p.18

⁶⁵ Onwuka, A (2018, February 27). Why state police without restructuring is dangerous. *The Punch*, p. 21.

⁶⁶ *ibid*



However, some antagonist of state police argues that it would lead to two rivalry institutions fighting for the same responsibilities, duties and assignments.⁶⁷ There are dissenting opinion that if state police is established it would be misused by the state government comparing the state police to state electoral commission how is been manipulated by various state government. He posited that what is needed for the functional police in Nigeria is funding, training and raising the numerical strength of police under the current arrangement.⁶⁸

Jang condemned the argument of the antagonist of the state police, he described them as people who do not see any danger of retaining the present structure of police which portrayed danger to the future of the country which he described as ‘Armageddon staring the country in the face’. He debunked the idea that governor will use the police for their own advantage with argument that people tend to neglect the local council election due to the facts that they regarded local councils as having no impact on their live as citizen to the extent that some of them did not even know their councillors let alone knowing their council’s chairman. They believe that local councils is just a tools in the hand of governor to rake money from the federation account unlike in working federal system like the United State of America where the mayor is important and relevant than the president. He argued further that it is irrelevant to compare election with security as it is not possible to compare orange with apple.

He stated that

We cannot be calling ourselves a federation and be running a unitary system of government. The two don’t work together.....if we want to run a federal system of government, we should run it properly. It is unfortunate that during the military which i was part of, we believed in a unitary system and we were trying to give the nation a constitution, we ended up giving the nation a unitary constitution to be

⁶⁷ Adedeji, O.A (2012) State poice in Nigeria: Issue and challenges. International Islamic University Malaysia <https://doi.org/2088033>.

⁶⁸ *ibid*



operated in a federal system of government, that is why nothing is working. So , if we really want to progress as a country, we must restructure the country⁶⁹

Pertinently, it may be argued in support of the protagonist of state police that the effectiveness of some local militia group such as Odua People Congress (OPC), Egbesu Boys, bakasi Boys etc led credence to the facts that security is local problems which could only be adequately solved by locals. In another argument, some state like Lagos creates its security trust fund for the purchase of equipment and allowances for the police posted to the state. This practice has been followed by some other state like Ogun and Oyo State.⁷⁰

5.0: CONCLUSION

The paper examines the origin of police in Nigeria, the native police from pre-independence to the post independence up to the present time, the structure of police was also discussed, the creation of state police, the argument for and against was also deliberated upon, security challenges facing Nigeria, the root causes of insecurity such as porous border, rural/urban drift, poverty and unemployment, leadership failure and followership problem are recorded as part of the causes of insecurity in Nigeria. However, to reduce tension in the society four major types of threats has been identified as a major concern of the government to remove in other to achieve sanity, ‘Physical threats (pain, injury, death), economic threats (seizure or destruction of property, denial of access to work or resources), threats to rights (imprisonment, denial of normal civil liberties) and threats to position or status (demotion, public humiliation)’. The paper found that the remedies available to curb insecurity in Nigeria is to decentralised the policing system from its presents form and allows for creation of state police since Nigeria is practicing the federal system of government which allows the federating state to make its rules and regulations within the ambit of federal Laws.

⁶⁹ Agabus P. (2018, February 14) Why we must restructure Nigeria –Jang. *Daily Post*, p.21

⁷⁰ Aleyomi M.B. (2013) Is state police panacea to security threat in Nigeria? *Afro asian journal of social sciences* 4 <https://doi.org/2229-5313>



6.0: RECOMMENDATIONS

Security of lives and property should be the duty of everybody in the society, therefore the issue of security should not be left to the police and government alone, on that note, it is hereby recommended as follows;

There should be as structural adjustment for the security institution in Nigeria, since the beauty of federal system of government in anywhere is being practice rest on the ability of state to cater for its citizen and to enact its own local laws which should be enforced by its local forces and be paid by the tax generated by that state.

Similarly, the level of insecurity in Nigeria recently has led credence to the facts that centralized police force is not working any longer in Nigeria, however, it is recommended that the federal government should decentralized the police force.

Furthermore, it is trite and sound illogical to be doing a thing the same way and be expecting different result, however to achieve a stable and secured society, the police as presently constituted should be revisited in term of infrastructures, equipment, training and funding.

Moreover, there should be a minimum entry requirement of Ordinary National Diploma as qualification for enlistment into police force, a situation where a school drop-out and area boys are being enlisted into the police force should be stopped since the job of policing nowadays is more of intelligence gathering rather than physical engagement.



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