

# The Need for Democratization of Security in Nigeria

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## INTRODUCTION

Nigeria, the most populous nation in the African continent, though rich in culture and resources, has been plagued by various security challenges, including terrorism, ethnic and religious conflicts, armed banditry, kidnapping, and other forms of criminality. Poor governance, economic instability, and the constant incidence of communal conflicts and violent crimes have marred the nation's reputation both locally and internationally. The inability of the government to effectively address these security threats has led to widespread fear, displacement of communities, loss of lives and livelihoods, and hindered economic growth. The populace does not feel safe and is quite wary of their future. People are becoming increasingly vocal about the lack of security and justice in Nigeria, and their exasperation often takes the form of violence and civil unrest. This state of Nigeria is a serious cause for concern as it is not only detrimental to the country's development but can also become a potential threat to the region. It is therefore important that the current situation in Nigeria be rectified, and constructive measures need to be taken to ensure the security and well-being of its citizens.

This paper seeks to explore the urgent need for the democratization of security in Nigeria to enhance accountability, ensure transparency, and empower communities in the decision-making processes related to security. It will focus on the democratization of security and the rule of law to essentially create an environment where the population feels safe and is free of violence. The paper will propose that in order to improve the security situation in Nigeria, it is imperative that there be a system of security and justice that is accountable to the Nigerian people. This must replace the current situation, which is the maintenance of security and the dispensation of justice as tools for the survival of the regime in power. This has been the case in Nigeria because historically, the instruments of the state have been used to serve the interests of a small ruling elite, rather than protect the welfare of the Nigerian people.

## Background

Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa and the 8th in the world. It is often hailed as the Giant of Africa and also considered a regional power (Ihonvbere, 1991). It has a rich potential for development given its versatile natural and human resources. However, Nigeria has persistently encountered years of political instability, conflicts, civil war, military coups, and authoritarianism in one form or the other since it gained independence from British colonial rule in 1960, leading to a dysfunctional state and a lack of realization for fulfilling the nation's potential. Political disorder has fostered corruption, ethnic rivalry, nepotism, clientelism, and mismanagement of resources. Another fallout of political instability is the spillover of violence and conflict into the general public, communities, and civil society. Discontent with the state and rivalries amongst political elites has often resulted in insurgency and protests, causing internal unrest and scandals igniting government repression and military crackdowns on citizens. Measures taken by the state to maintain its own security and survival have been to the detriment of society. Often identified are political motives behind internal conflicts between the government and rebel groups for control of resources. The

United States Institute of Peace (2010) asserts that not all threats to security in Nigeria come from conflict; instead, much comes from the state's inability to control instances of political disorder and lawlessness. Analyses by the World Bank (2003) and Transparency International (2011) on corruption claim that Nigeria has been misusing political resources and power, resulting in poor allocation of funds, embezzlement, and theft, causing a persistent state of low-intensity conflict where people suffer from crimes committed with an increasing level of impunity.

These conflicts have resulted in changes to the patterns and typologies of violence used in Nigeria. Typical criminal activity has transformed into organized crime conducted by groups to secure their long and short-term interests. Moreover, the general levels of violence in Nigeria, despite the location, have greatly increased. It has become apparent to other states that the type of environment in Nigeria is not suitable for conducive diplomacy, and security has been an issue for both the state and the international actors involved in Nigeria. A most recent concern is the spillover of violence from the conflicts in the Central African Republic and Mali into Nigeria (Mwangi K et al, 2014). The Boko Haram insurgency is an example of a conflict that has transnational implications and involvement of both state and non-state actors in the neighboring countries.

Given the unfortunate reoccurrences of transmissive altercations in society, it is unrevealed why corrective measures have not been administered to prevent the escalation of the threats to the state of national security in Nigeria. Over the years, internal conflicts in the form of militant group activities have acquired disruptive characteristics associated with frequent spates of armed violence with the intention of challenging the government's authority. Despite successes in securing oil production and recovery in the Niger Delta, such activities have given rise to a phenomenon known as violence dilemmas, where the threat of violence has become a tool used by competing groups in attempts to secure demands from the government and the international community (Cyril Obi, 2010). As a result, these specific areas of Nigeria have not addressed the catalysts of the conflicts and they may reignite due to the absence of substantial alternative means to provide somewhat illogical but necessary greater incentives from ceasing to use violence.

### **Objective of the Paper**

The objective of this paper is to identify the problems arising from the involvement of the Nigerian Military in internal security matters and to evaluate the impact of this involvement on the overall security situation in the country, as well as make some recommendations as to how the security situation can be improved. Though these recommendations may not all be immediately implementable, there is still some value in discussing them, with the hope that they may be considered in the future. This is because the current situation in Nigeria cannot be allowed to persist. With the international security environment placing ever greater emphasis on issues such as good governance and democratization, Nigeria's current security crisis is not just a national problem but has become an international concern. As a result, there is some hope that both internal and external pressure may result in the Nigerian government taking steps to implement the various measures recommended in this paper, with a view to improving the security situation in the long term.

### **HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE**

The historical trajectory of security management in Nigeria can be divided into several phases. The pre-colonial era was characterized by relatively low levels of insecurity, at least from the standpoint of modern conceptions of crime and safety (Pratten, 2008). With no centralized police force at the onset of British colonial rule, chiefs and clan heads were responsible for security and judiciary functions in their respective areas. One major step in the Nigerian government's provision of security and law enforcement was the creation of the Native Administration Police (NAP) in 1916 (Joseph Ebune, 2016). The NAP were the

and transnational corporations, lack of training, discipline, funding, and the semi-military nature of the NAP often led to conflict with civilians (a trend that would characterize Nigerian security forces to the present day). In spite of this, the NAP were successful at reducing the level of inter-communal violence in rural areas. In 1930, the Lagos Police was amalgamated with the NAP and was then designated the Nigeria Police Force, still in existence today. The new force was tasked with assuming the roles of the NAP and providing security in Nigeria's increasingly urbanizing society (Killingray, 1986). A few years later, the British would also establish the West African Frontier Force (WAFF), an internal security unit designed to defend West Africa from invasion by European powers in the event of another World War. WAFF would also see action in the Burma campaign and various other theaters in World War 2. These events were significant in that they were the first steps to the Nigeria Police Force assuming the role of a general internal security maintenance and law enforcement agency, a role which it is ill-suited to fulfill given the country's current policing needs. The WAFF also played a role in later internal conflicts in Nigeria and was a precursor to the Nigerian military in its domestic security function (Ukpabi, 1966).

### **Evolution of Security in Nigeria**

Focusing first on the internal security environment, one of the hallmarks of security provision in Nigeria is the fragmentation of the definitions and providers of security. This became most evident during the first republic (1960-1966) when Nigeria was a federal state, with considerable political, economic, and security sector autonomy given to the regions (Osaghae, 1992). Nigeria's security history has evolved with broad developmental, political, socio-economic, and cultural changes. These have also been influenced by wider security sector changes in the international environment. These changes have been more visible at some times than others. Often, they occur as responses to various "crises" – events that threatened the security of the state and its people. It is difficult to separate a consideration of security development with general Nigerian history, and often the two have been intertwined. In consideration of security sector reforms, it is important to consider both the development of the internal security system as well as the Nigerian military. Both have often been involved in mutual or complementary roles in dealing with internal and external security threats.

### **Impact of Colonialism**

Colonialism had a profound effect on the whole social structure of Nigeria, including the area of security. It involved the subjugation of the country to the interests of the metropolitan country, through the establishment of direct or indirect political control which ensured economic, military, and diplomatic dependence (Alemika, 1997). Security, in terms of the protection of the colonial government's interests and the maintenance of law and order, the implementation of systems designed to achieve these ends were clear. Externally, the colonial powers intervened in West Africa to check the efforts of other European states to challenge their trade in the area, to overcome any native opposition to or constraints upon the activities of their merchants, and to establish and maintain a legitimate sphere of influence (Frankema, et al, 2018). These tasks were initially undertaken by the various chartered companies that had been given the task of administering and developing the new colonies. For example, Lord Lugard, who was a British ex-officer serving in East Africa, tried to promote the use of chartered companies as tools of colonization. Using his experience, he pushed for this in Nigeria and succeeded in having a company rule in parts of Northern Nigeria (Mieke van der Linden, 2016). This intervention by European powers could lead to warfare between the European adversaries or with native groups who were perceived to be a threat to the security of the area. For example, an Anglo-French convention of 1898 recognized the superiority of France in a claimed sphere of influence over the area around Lake Chad. This heightened the mutual suspicions that the French and the British had about each other's intentions in West Africa and was a contributing factor to the hostilities that occurred between the two colonial powers (Gjersø, Jonas Fossli, 2015).

## Post-Independence Challenges

During the 42 years of military rule in Nigeria (1966-1999), security and governance in Nigeria interconnected and ranged between enhanced or bad governance dependent on the capability of the regime in power at the given time to manage the internal and external security challenges to the regime. During these years, Nigeria was characterized by a number of internal security issues. The most severe security issue of this era was the attempted succession of Biafra from Nigeria under Lt. Col. Odumegwu Ojukwu on the 30th May 1967 (Philips Okolo, 2010). The result was a civil war that lasted 30 months, and while there was only one conflict that threatened the rule of the regime, the conflict led to government paranoia and insecurity, which led to a series of mistakes and bad policies that took Nigeria further from good governance. As observed by Oshita O. Oshita et al, (2019), internal security was a priority during military rule to ensure events such as the Biafran conflict did not reoccur and threaten the stability of the state. However, due to the militarization of the police and civil security institutions during colonialism, the military was unsuited to the task of providing law and order in a non-coercive manner. It was during the Civil War that the Nigerian military first developed a Domestic Operations doctrine (Alabi, D. O, 2013). However, the learning process and failures in development led the regime to rely upon short-term solutions focused around military force and intelligence collection which were widely off the mark from addressing the root causes of Nigeria's security problems and served to further entrench Nigeria's culture of 'might is right' in governance and security issues.

## Security Threats in Nigeria

Unconventional security threats facing Nigeria have reached an unprecedented level, with adverse effects on national and regional stability. In recent years, Nigeria has been beset by serious and ongoing security problems, which threaten to seriously undermine its relative stability and development potential. The current security threats derived from internal state security challenges fall into the traditional and non-traditional security categories. Traditional security threats in Nigeria include internal and external challenges to the territorial integrity of the state. This has included the Bakassi Peninsula dispute with Cameroon and continuing disagreement with Cameroon over the Nigeria-Cameroon border. A recent sign of improvement in Nigeria's traditional security issues was the agreement between Nigeria and Cameroon at the D2 Roundtable Meeting in New York to accept the decision of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on the Bakassi Peninsula as the complete and final resolution of the issue and to take all necessary measures to ensure peaceful and orderly transfer of authority in the region (<https://press.un.org/en/2006/afr1397.doc.htm>). This agreement demonstrates a commitment to conflict resolution and prevention with a neighbouring state, although there are still many implementation issues to overcome. Prompting from the ICJ decision both Nigeria and Cameroon have stressed the need for socio-economic development assistance for the affected populations on both sides of the border. Although traditional security threats are of concern, it is non-traditional security issues which have affected and will continue to affect most Nigerians.

## ROLE OF GOVERNMENT

The role of government in providing security is so vital that without active participation and commitment to the issue, no right-thinking individual will expect an effective remedy to the ever-growing problem of insecurity from kidnapping, assassination, terrorism, armed robbery, to ritual killing that is seriously threatening lives and property. It is no gainsaying that security is a principal condition for the survival and welfare of the individuals and groups within a state. In Section 14(2) (b) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999, security and welfare of the people are conjunctively presented as a sole purpose and primary responsibility of government. Without security, the very fabric of society, so much to prevent a state of anarchy, will be threatened, often leading to migration movements. Government has the



responsibility to provide a secure environment within which its citizens can live in peace and security, free from fear of harm and violence to their persons or property. This includes taking all necessary means available to deal with threatening situations or events that might compromise the security of citizens or the nation. In other words, it is about providing preventive measures at situations in which harm to the nation's interests might occur, sometimes taking measures before there is a clear and specific threat to anything in particular.

## EFFECTIVENESS OF SECURITY FORCES

The role and effectiveness of the armed forces and police in guaranteeing peace and security in Nigeria has been one that has been subject to much discussion. In an address titled “*Nigerian Military is Almost Finished*” (2017), former Chief of Army Staff, Lt Gen Victor Malu maintained that the Nigerian military is poorly equipped and cannot defend the nation's territorial integrity shows the concerns over the ability of the armed forces to provide security from internal and external threats. This statement largely rings true with varying police and military regimes in place. The armed forces have historically been more involved in politics than providing security for the nation's populace. The gross underfunding in the security forces has seen Nigeria in recent years spend on average 0.64% of GDP on military expenditure, a treasure that is in stark contrast to the GDP percentage in years past and falls well short of the Africa average of around 1% (Aaron O'Neill, 2024). The implications of these statements and findings point to an ineffective security force that has lacked the motivation and resources to combat the wide variety of security threats posed to Nigeria. Formations of the Nigerian security forces and their effectiveness in dealing with the plethora of security threats in a comprehensive manner have been hindered by the lack of a national security strategy endorsed by successive Nigerian governments. Implementation and oversight of such a strategy would be the duty of the National Security Council as stipulated in the 1986 Decree establishing the council.

## IMPLICATIONS OF CENTRALIZED SECURITY

Security sector centralization leads to a situation in which decision makers have a high capacity to allocate resources (Uzuegbu-Wilson, 2019). When security sector is centralized, decision makers have more control over resource allocation, which can have both positive and negative consequences. Centralization allows for more efficient allocation of resources and coordination of efforts, leading to a more unified and cohesive security strategy. However, it also concentrates power in the hands of a few individuals or entities, potentially leading to abuses of power and lack of accountability. Centralization can also limit the input and perspectives of different stakeholders, such as local communities, civil society organizations, and marginalized groups. This lack of diversity in decision-making can lead to policies that do not adequately address the needs and concerns of all individuals affected by security measures. Additionally, centralization can create a culture of secrecy and lack of transparency within the security sector. Without proper oversight and accountability mechanisms in place, decision makers may abuse their power or make decisions that are not in the best interest of the population.

A security sector characterized by its centralization, whether in authoritarian or democratic systems, carries with it a number of implications. This is primarily due to the concentration of resources, in our case mainly human resources in the military, in the hands of one individual or a very small group. These implications may not in themselves greatly impact the immediate security situation of the country, but in terms of development and sustainability of democratization, they are of great significance. According to a Security Consultant and Defence Strategist, Colonel Hassan Stan-Labo (rtd), (2024), the centralization of security in Nigeria is not a new concept; elements of it have been present in almost all of Nigeria's history since independence, however it is the extent of this centralization during military rule and the persistence of it in the current democratic dispensation that plays a major role in current and future security issues.

The concentration of extraordinary powers in the hands of the ruling elite is a common feature of all centralized security systems. It allows for the bypass of political institutions and effectively places the security apparatus above the law. Nigeria's history is riddled with examples of military dictatorship. As recently as 1993, a democratically elected president was ousted from power. Since that time, we have yet to see a government in Nigeria that is truly accountable to the people. If those in power are not subject to the law, then those under them can never hope to be. This has dire implications for the potential for security sector reform in Nigeria.

### **1. Lack of Accountability**

The concentration of executive power in Nigeria has undermined the effectiveness of the judiciary and the legislature. This has created a system where the executive branch holds significant influence over the other branches of government, leading to a lack of checks and balances and a weakening of the democratic system. Another in which the concentration of executive power undermines the effectiveness of the judiciary in Nigeria is through the appointment of judges, where the president or the executive arm of government exercises significant control over the appointment of judges. This can result in the politicization of the judiciary. Concentration of executive power is also capable of hindering the effectiveness of the legislature, as the executive arm of government exerts so much influence through control over the budget and the ability to dissolve the legislature. This may result in lack of transparency, oversight and accountability in government. In order to address these issues, it is important to reform the system of checks and balances in Nigeria to ensure that no single branch of government has too much power. It is argued that non-accountability provides an environment in which security forces have almost unlimited powers to act in any way they see fit (Dan Kuwali, 2023). In such an environment, it is highly improbable that the security forces would feel inclined to switch from their present object of maintaining regime security to become more people-oriented.

### **2. Marginalization of Local Communities**

The most poignant example of the marginalization felt by local communities in Nigeria is the conflict in the Niger Delta. The Niger Delta is home to the majority of Nigeria's oil reserves, which provides the country with significant revenue. However, despite the wealth generated from the region, the local communities have not benefited from the oil industry. Instead, they have been left with polluted waterways, deforested land, and a lack of access to clean drinking water and healthcare. The Niger Delta is an extremely ethnically and linguistically diverse region; however, over the years, the state has generalized the entire region as one homogeneous area. The government and oil multinationals have long seen the oil of the Niger Delta as a resource for the entire nation and thus have only been concerned with maximizing yields. This has led to the neglect and degradation of the environment and the people of the region. Measures of security have been implemented to ensure the protection of oil assets; however, the people of the Niger Delta have seen the presence of an increase of security forces only as a means to further protect the interests of the central government and the oil companies. This has led to an increase in tension between the people of the region and the security forces, as the people feel that they are being unfairly targeted as militant groups who threaten the oil revenue. The people of the Niger Delta feel that security measures are only aimed at them, and this has led to increased violence and insurgency in the region. Once again, this conflict has only furthered feelings of marginalization and has increased relative deprivation in an already very poor region.

Marginalization occurs when certain groups or communities are excluded from decision-making processes or are not being taken into account (Miller, et al,1988). The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) World Factbook states that Nigeria is home to over 250 ethnic groups. These groups are diverse in culture, language, and traditions. Each ethnic group has its own unique customs, beliefs, and way of life,

contributing to the rich cultural tapestry of the country. There is a need for security provision that takes into account these differences and is flexible and adaptable enough to suit differing local conditions. However, recommendations for a more community-based security approach have not been put into practice and have even been ignored. During the colonial era, Nigeria's security forces were structured to primarily protect the interests of the colonial government, rather than the people. This legacy has continued into the present day where security provision is viewed as an instrument to protect the interests of the ruling regime or the central government, rather than the interests of the general population. This further solidifies the exclusion of certain communities from security provision and only serves to increase feelings of relative deprivation and marginalization.

## **BENEFITS OF DEMOCRATIZATION OF SECURITY**

The democratic provision of security will greatly benefit Nigerian communities. First, it will increase community participation in security provision. This means that communities will have more say over the security measures employed, which can be specified to best suit their needs. Currently, community participation is limited to intelligence gathering and the establishment of vigilante groups to supplement the efforts of formal security agents. The former is often done out of necessity to protect communities from violence, while the latter is often viewed as a threat by security agents or is poorly regulated and only adds to the security problems present. In such cases, vigilante groups have been known to commit human rights abuses. With the democratization of formal security provision, the establishment of vigilante groups will be greatly reduced as they will no longer be necessary for community protection from violence and will be regulated to prevent human rights abuses. At best, communities will be able to form partnerships with the formal security sector to work together in the maintenance of security.

### **1. Increased Community Participation**

The idea that increased community participation leads to improved safety is based on a widely accepted theory related to social control and crime prevention. This theory argues that active participation in the maintenance of social order leads to an increased stake in the community and encourages the development of informal social control mechanisms aimed at preventing the occurrence of deteriorations in public order and safety. Participation can take many forms, however a key factor in the prevention of crime and maintenance of public safety involves active community involvement in the identification of safety needs and the determination of collective strategies aimed at addressing those needs. When community members have a say in what are the most pressing safety concerns for their area, they are more likely to feel a sense of empowerment and control in regards to their own safety. They are also more likely to cooperate and coordinate with local government and law enforcement agencies in an effort to find solutions to safety concerns. This cooperation between the formal and informal structures of governance, often referred to as a carrying capacity for the prevention of crime and violence. Essentially it is believed that through increased community participation there is a greater potential to effectively reduce rates of crime and violence due to the fact that both the community and the formal institutions are working together towards a common goal.

### **2. Enhanced Trust and Collaboration**

By contrast, attitudes toward global security agencies only express conditional cooperation based upon the promise of more aid or security provision, not trust and collaboration. This is due to the misalignment between the interests of the security providers and the local population. Typically, security sector institutions and actors pursue their own interests or the interests of foreign funders. Yet, there is no assumption that the goals of international or private security agencies are conflicting with those of the local populations, but rather that the agencies lack an understanding of local needs and have simply pursued the strategy that is most conducive to their own interests. This can be due to the fact that there is an assumed

common interest in that global security will create an environment more friendly and secure for the public. However, this too often remains an assumption on the part of the public with little evidence to suggest that security provided by global security agencies has done more good than harm to local populations. This situation, no matter how well-intentioned, does not represent collaboration between security providers and those whom they are trying to protect.

When individuals or communities directly participate in decisions regarding their security, there is a stronger sense of ownership or stake in the decisions made. This participatory process creates an enabling environment for greater collaboration between security sector providers and local communities. A relationship in which the community has a stake and can hold security providers accountable for their actions increases the likelihood that security providers will work to provide safety and protection in a manner that is both responsive to local needs and free from corruption. This is the type of security assistance and protection that is vital in solving complex emergencies.

With the shift from monolithic to a democratic security, trust can be viewed in terms of both vertical and horizontal accountability. When security is provided by local and individual communities in a manner that is respectful and responsive to local needs, the people develop positive attitudes towards security sector actors, providers, and institutions. The fundamental requirement for community members to recognize security sector agents as legitimate is that the agents abide by human rights standards and the rule of law in providing security. Confidence in local security providers comes from knowing that the providers will not misuse their power, will respond to local needs, and will be held accountable should they not provide security in a respectful and unbiased manner.

### **3. Improved Responsiveness to Local Needs**

The responsiveness of the police to the needs of local communities has a direct bearing on the value of their service. At present, police response to crime and other calls for assistance is generally slow. This is due in large part to the fact that police resources are stretched thin, and must be allocated according to the priorities of the state authorities. This means that little police attention is given to the problems of the poor and powerless. When state police do act in local communities, they often do so in a repressive manner, which only serves to alienate the populace. This was the case in the Nigerian capital of Abuja where, in the process of razing illegal squatter settlements, police destroyed the homes of many innocent people who had no ties to the original settlers and were in the country's capital seeking legitimate work. When asked for an explanation of their actions, police leadership stated that they were carrying out an order from the head of state, and would not be deterred by protests. Such callous behavior is indicative of the disconnection between police and local populations. On the other hand, vigilante groups are often too quick to take action, carrying out vigilante justice and sometimes targeting the wrong individuals. Whether the action taken by these groups is just or unjust, it circumvents the rule of law. These groups have long since recognized the need for security in their communities, and if presented with a better alternative, would gladly join in a community policing effort. Such an opportunity has been presented in many parts of Nigeria by various neighborhood watch programs, and in the PROC by the formation of Peasant-policeman Cooperation Committees. While the prospect of community policing would offer a better alternative to the status quo, it is still subject to the influences of state political structures. The best way to ensure that local needs are addressed in prevention and control of crime is by implementation of some form of security sector reform. This will be fully realized only through full transition to democratic governance, but as will be seen, there are measures that can be taken now in our existing state and in our various local communities.

## **CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS**

It is evident that the more political the nature of police and security sector reform, the more resistance from



those who stand to lose both influence and livelihood. It is not unusual for such reforms to be used as a political football with each successive administration reversing the decisions of the former. This can be particularly problematic in post-conflict or fragile states where there is often a large turnover of government. It is often the case that politicians will use the security sector as a way providing lucrative jobs to their supporters as opposed to creating an effective and accountable system. Whilst democrats may agree in principle to the need to democratize security, it can often be viewed as too high risk an endeavor when considering the need to provide a secure environment for development to take place. At the micro level, police officers may resist change because they feel it threatens their position or benefits them in no material way. United Nations missions are often mistakenly seen as quick fix solutions to security sector reform. In setting short-term quantitative goals, missions can be an impediment to building local ownership for reform as they are more concerned with immediate stability than they are with creating a system that will function effectively when they depart.

### **Resistance to Change**

Security sector reform is seen as a threat to these organs and their established role in Nigerian governance, as it implies the requirement to alter their current behavior and to become more accountable to the Nigerian people. A more democratic and transparent security sector may well be contrary to the interests of the rulers and rule makers who currently benefit the most from existing arrangements. A security sector that truly serves the needs of the Nigerian people may not be in the best interest of those in power.

The Nigerian State Security Service is primarily concerned with internal security and intelligence gathering for the government, thereby aligning its mission with the interests of the ruling regime. The Nigerian police force, while officially responsible for law enforcement, has a long tradition of wielding its constabulary and investigative powers to further the political ambitions of the ruling elite. These internal security organs have been highly interventionist in Nigerian politics and have consistently engaged in the repression of political opposition.

Nigeria security stakeholders often resist change and are reluctant to accommodate or alter the manner in which security is understood and sustained. This resistance to change is to be expected, as security is deeply embedded in the mechanisms of the Nigerian state and society. Security in Nigeria remains a state-centric affair, with political and military leaders vested in the pursuit and practice of security being a political tool.

### **Capacity Building**

Capacity building in the Nigeria security sector involves developing the management, effectiveness and efficiency of the various agencies responsible for citizen security and safety. It often involves institutional development and may also incorporate the reform of structures and mandates, job training and other measures designed to improve both individual and collective performance. The ultimate objective is to enhance the ability of the security sector to effectively and efficiently deliver public service, to be accountable to the public, and to operate within a rights-based framework. This can only be improved by increasing the political will and resources dedicated to the improvement of the security sector. Failure to do so will result in continued poor internal security and violence, and also place constraints on further capacity-building.

In the broadest sense, capacity building is conceptualized as it involves the process of developing and strengthening the skills, instincts, abilities, processes and resources that organizations and communities need to survive, adapt, and thrive in the fast-changing world. It is an ongoing process by which individuals, groups, organizations, institutions, and societies increase their ability to contribute to the development of their communities and the achievement of their own objectives.

## Legal and Policy Framework

It is important to recognize that the primary obstacle to the implementation of the above is that people holding power in security sector organizations are often resistant to change that would undermine their power, control, and prerogatives. Hence, the concept of federalism and its intentions are constantly undermined. Adult suffrage is guaranteed with regular elections; however, the electoral process and its legitimacy have been contentious issues. The INEC was established as an autonomous body to oversee electoral processes, and it has experienced a range of successes and failures in attempts to reform the electoral process. One of the significant failures was in the drafting of the Electoral Act of 2010. This act was deemed flawed as the special interests of political parties and powerful politicians managed to tamper with the bill's passage, and the 10th-year rule attacked the act's legitimacy and the doctrines of separate and equal, and rule of law. This resulted in the new act not being able to address the fundamental issues within the electoral process. At the same time, the approach to security sector oversight and management has been problematic given that security organizations are very resistant to election-derived government oversight. An oft-cited section of the Police Act says the police shall be subject to the general direction of the SFP and such other authority as the service may from time to time establish. This is contradictory to the separate and subject to the word of the highest authority principal outlined in the constitution. The evolving nature of security sector legislation and the various problematic aspects of its implementation provide both an impetus and space for continued civil society dialogue and analysis of security sector governance issues.

Overall, there is an elaborate set of legal and institutional frameworks governing procurement, management, and oversight of security sector organizations and operations in Nigeria. One of the strengths of the legal and policy framework in Nigeria is that there has been relatively free debate and analysis over the problematic areas of security sector governance. This is typified by the ongoing range of government and civil society initiatives to reform security sector legislation and practice. The 1999 constitution is the supreme legal document and provides both a legal and normative framework for behavior, and it mandates respect for human rights and a democratic form of governance. It established a federal system of government consisting of the federal capital territory, 36 states, and a federal government. Nigeria, in theory, is a federal republic, and this ideal has been reflected in the creation of a federal system of government as a legal framework for a united, secure, and free nation.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

It has been suggested in literature and practice that the process of democratization must be comprehensive in terms of objectives. Ake (2000) has argued that Nigeria should avoid a situation of 'political democratization' only while retaining military internal security practices. This was one of the problems witnessed during the first and second republics. It will be essential that there is democratization in all areas of Nigerian society. This will also apply to internal and external security issues. The foregoing analysis has shown that security forces in Nigeria since independence have been utilized to the detriment of the Nigerian people and in the interests of the ruling establishment. Steps must be taken to ensure this situation does not arise again in the future. One method of ensuring that there is security sector accountability to the citizenry is to insist that security force provisions are included in Constitutional guarantees of human rights. Ball (1996) has argued that Nigeria has floundered in the past between 'quasi-democratic' and 'quasi-authoritarian' regimes. It has been mentioned earlier that security force roles have been mixed up with action against political opposition. Laws must be introduced to ensure security forces are not utilized for partisan political purposes. This will again necessitate change in the military political culture. On the ground level, this will necessitate drastic security sector reform. Rotberg (2002) suggests that there should be 'total reform and reorientation' of the internal security culture. It will be necessary to redefine security force roles in society and re-address security priorities. Measures should be taken to make security forces more

accountable and to re-evaluate command structures. One method suggested to wrestle initiative from security forces is reduction of policing and internal security roles of the military. This will be a difficult and dangerous task, and it will be essential that this is not attempted until a more stable and democratic political culture is established. Success of this would be gauged by reduction in military and police budgets and a shift of resources away from the security sector.

### **1. Decentralization of Security Forces**

Decentralization of security is a key step towards addressing the current crisis in security and law and order. Decentralization involves a transfer of responsibility and authority, both de jure and de facto, from central to regional and local level institutions. It often involves the diversification of service delivery and greater participation in the decision-making process. The current structure of the Nigerian Police Force is one of centralized decay; undeniably, it has been characterized by increasingly dangerous security environments and by a consistent decline in operations and management effectiveness. Force concentration at the federal level has led to neglect and the eventual collapse in law enforcement in many states. A federal system with three levels of policing – federal, state, and local – is too expensive and is simply not viable given Nigeria's current economic plight. Since 1962, there have been various committees and panels set up to investigate the possibility of decentralization and the restructuring of police forces in Nigeria. All have shared the common belief that there is a need to increase efficiency and effectiveness and have agreed that decentralization is a fundamental requisite to stability and security.

### **2. Strengthening Community Policing**

In order to implement an effective community policing program, a critical mass of the police organization has to be reoriented and police officer mindset has to change. This desired change has to start from the top leadership of the police organization. This is a tall order as the authority is dealing with a deeply ingrained police subculture that is highly resistant to change because it has been conditioned by decades of centralized, militarized, and bureaucratic law enforcement. At the same time, the current bad state of security and public safety in the country today and the deteriorating law and order situation means there is a compelling and urgent case for change. It is not to say that the current policing and security management strategy, which is largely based on military tactics, is effective, but the problem is there has been a lack of political will and commitment to seriously explore alternative strategies and options.

There is a need to make community policing an effective internal security management option. An effective decentralized community policing system in Nigeria will lead to better accountability of police to the people, facilitate police responsiveness to local concerns, encourage individual and community initiative in identifying and addressing public safety problems, and improve the quality of life in the country. In other words, decentralized community policing not only lowers crime but also raises the self-esteem and quality of life for the people.

Community policing as a strategic approach towards crime reduction and prevention is intended to create proactive solutions to the immediate conditions that give rise to public safety issues. It is a philosophy that promotes organizational strategies, which support the systematic use of partnerships and problem-solving techniques, to proactively address the immediate conditions that give rise to public safety issues such as crime, social disorder, and fear of crime.

### **3. Public Awareness and Education**

The overarching theme in security policies was that the British masters only needed security to protect British interests in Nigeria. Ogunskin (1989) noted that it was not necessary for national integration and political stability, which are the main concerns in Nigeria today. It is essential that there is a change in

attitudes and the media portrayal of security. This can be achieved through education and the existence of trust and a friendly understanding between Nigerian security forces and the community, so they can work together in the prevention of crime and conflict. With the approval of the community, public awareness can be directed through the media to change the negative perception of security and to develop national pride and increased respect for security forces. The ultimate goal is an effective civil society to manage conflicts and crime without the interference of security forces. Therefore, the immediate needs of Nigeria today are for structured education programs for security forces with a heavy emphasis on re-orientation and public awareness campaigns.

## CONCLUSION

The security institutions in Nigeria are poorly funded and are inadequate in both numbers and in capability to adequately address the security challenges in Nigeria. This has resulted in the security institutions relying on the military to address internal security threats, which has led to the exacerbation of internal conflict and perpetration of gross human rights violations, especially in areas where the military has been deployed. In addition to that, the police and paramilitary in Nigeria have become politicized and are often used as tools to intimidate opposition or protect and serve the ruling class. This has further undermined their capability to provide safety to the people.

The paper has critically examined the various dimensions of the Nigerian security and conflicts and their implications on the people. The Paper has also critically analyzed the Nigerian security system and institutions and evaluated their effectiveness and roles in addressing the country's security challenges and providing safety to the people. The Paper has also performed a comparative analysis of contemporary security systems and practices in other countries to assess their relevance to the Nigerian situation and how the best practices can be adopted to address the security problems in Nigeria.

Finally, security sector reform in Nigeria is an essential precondition for the country's slum dwellers to move out of poverty and away from marginalization. This is because the security forces of Nigeria, rather than protecting the poorest in society from threats, are themselves a direct and daily threat to the slum dwellers.

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