

The Need for Supportive Security Initiatives in Nigeria

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Abstract

In Nigeria, there are wall to wall kidnappings, killer herdsmen, armed robbery and other social vices among other crimes and criminalities. The Nigeria police has failed woefully in its constitutional responsibilities of protecting lives and property. People kill, maim and commit terrible crimes without repercussions such that there is no law and order in Nigeria. Nigerians cannot sit back or continue to suffer untold hardship in Nigeria. There is nothing wrong with the formation of supportive security initiatives in the states that form the Nigeria federation. Information and data used in this study were obtained mostly from secondary sources and from personal experience with the Nigerian insecurity scene. This paper critically examined the collapse of the centralized national security apparatus in Nigeria, the issues of herdsmen, kidnappings, armed robbery and theft in Nigeria. This paper also reviewed some important cases of insecurity and the effects of collapsed security apparatus in the Nigerian state. Findings in the study showed that supportive state security initiatives are germane in Nigeria with an intent to rendering lawful assistance to protection of lives and property. It was suggested that amnesty should not be given to bandits and Nigeria should not negotiate with bandits. It is a means of patronizing terrorism among others in Nigeria.

Keywords: wall to wall kidnappings, herdsmen, boko haram, armed robbery, collapsing security apparatus, militants, lives and property, Nigeria police.

Introduction

Supportive security initiatives are germane in Nigeria against the back drop of the collapsing security apparatus in Nigeria. It is a way to go in addressing the security challenges in Nigeria. It appears Nigeria can no longer engage enough man power to police and secure the entire country. Non effective funding mechanism and arrangement for professionalism had reduced the Nigerian state to an unsecured and unpoliced state. In Nigeria, it appears security is highly politicized such that crime and criminality now hold sway. People kill, maim and commit terrible crimes without repercussions such that the refrain is that there is no law in Nigeria,

The Nigerian police cannot surmount the security challenges confronting the country; the security situation in Nigeria is overwhelming and we must act now. Supportive security initiatives in Nigeria are fundamental with a view to complementing the efforts of federal police. The Nigerian police is far from overcoming the security challenges in Nigeria.

The issue of cattle rustling, Boko Haram, wall to wall kidnappings, armed robbery and theft have assumed alarming proportion. It is impossible for the federal Government to employ enough manpower to police the whole of Nigeria. Nigerians cannot fold their hands, watch, see and or continue to suffer untold hardship in Nigeria.

Many of states in Nigeria reasoned that there is nothing wrong with formation of supportive security initiatives in their states. This informed the Bayelsa state to set up the community safety corps and the water security all backed up by the law. The Borno state security initiative is called the Mai Gora, the Kano state has the Hisba, the Anambra state Government has the state vigilante outfit backed up with law and recently, the southwest geo-political zone in Nigeria set-up the Amotekun security initiative. There is nothing wrong with the formation of supportive security initiatives in the states, because they are meant to protect lives and property and will make us live in peace and harmony as well.

Supportive security initiatives in Nigeria are function of loss of confidence in the security apparatus of the Federal Government. When the citizens lose confidence in the security apparatus of the Federal Government, the people will resort to self-help. For instance, in Kagara, Niger state, bandits were asking for ₦800m as ransom from the family of a kidnapped victim. (Nanlong 2021).

This paper critically examined the collapse of the centralized national security apparatus in Nigeria, the issues of herdsmen, wall to wall kidnappings, armed robbery and other social vices in Nigeria with some reported cases of insecurity in Nigeria and effects of insecurity in Nigeria. Based on the above, it was recommended that Amnesty should not be given to bandits. Nigerians should not negotiate with bandits. It is a means of patronizing terrorism among others in Nigeria.

Literature Review

Terrorism, kidnapping, crime and criminally have taken a wide dimension in Nigeria. The citizens are helpless as the government could not discharged her constitutional responsibility of protecting lives and property. The conspicuous negligence of the government to checkmate and counter all these social vices is nothing to write home about. The Nigerians now sleep with two eyes opening for fear of being taken by hoodlums unaware. Adebakin and Raimi (2012) posit that Nigeria has increased her expenditure on security. The larger government resources is allocated to national security at the expense of other sectors as education, agriculture and others.

Regardless of the chunk of national resources to contain the insurgency in the Northern Region of Nigeria, the Nigeria government has not been able to manage the situation. The Nigeria armed forces and the police have failed in their responsibility to contain internal insurgency in Nigeria. Apart from the national resources spent on the insecurity in Nigeria on the three level of governments, Adebakin and Raimi did not suggest the need for supportive security initiatives in Nigeria such as state police, local government and communal police, local government and communal police to help the government contain crime and criminality.

The security vote is a conduct pipe for the government to steal state resources. Okechukwu & Anyadike (2013) posit that the incumbent security network in Nigeria lacks the capacity

to protect lives and property of the citizens. That the weak security architecture in Nigeria has created a situation privation of security in Nigeria.

If the government lacks the capacity to protect lives and property, there is need for supportive security initiatives in Nigeria. It is against this backdrop this paper perused into the failure of the government to protect lives and property in Nigeria.

Statement of Problem

There is a consensus among Nigerians that the government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria has failed in her security responsibility. There is no day in Nigeria that the media would not report cases of Boko Haram insurgency, kidnapping and hostage taking, armed robbers.

The problem of insecurity in Nigeria could be traced to the elites. The elites in Nigeria are the brain behind political, social, economic and religious crisis in Nigeria. In Nigeria insecurity has been institutionalized that crime and criminality now hold sway. The Nigerian armed forces and police are handicapped in discharging their constructional responsibility. The security apparatus in Nigeria is therefore window dressing, collecting money from road users and paying lipstick services to their security responsibility.

It is cumbersome for the government to do the needful and Nigerians cannot set back and celebrate the insecurity in Nigeria. This informs the situation where almost the states in Nigeria set up community vigilante group to protect the lives and property of their citizens. The need for supportive security initiative cannot be over emphasized hence this study.

Research Questions

The following research questions are designed to guide the study.

- (i) What is the role of the elites on insecurity in Nigeria?
- (ii) What is the constitutional responsibility of the government in security matters in Nigeria?
- (iii) What is the need for community vigilante group in Nigeria? and
- (iv) What is the reason while government failed to protect lives and property in Nigeria?

Objectives of the Study

The major objective of this work is for the government to protect lives and property of Nigerians.

The specific objectives are to:

- (i) examine the roles of the elites on insecurity in Nigeria;
- (ii) examine the constitutional responsibility of the government in security matters in Nigeria;
- (iii) examine the need for community policing in Nigeria; and
- (iv) examine the reasons why government failed to protect lives and property.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework we applied for this paper is the theory of "federalism". The front-line exponents of this theory were A. Hamilton, A. V Dicey, and K.C Wheare. They belong to the federalism school.

The hallmark of this theory is that a federal state has a central authority that acts for and represents all the federating states in external affairs and some internal affairs as are held to be of general interest, that in a federalism there are state authorities with powers of making laws and administration within the powers given to them by the constitution of a particular country.

Hamilton defined federalism as "an association of states that form a new one". A. V Dicey (1939) on his own part adumbrated that federal state is "a political contrivance intended to reconcile national unity with the maintenance of the state rights". K. C Wheare (1953) opened: "by the federal principle, I mean the method of dividing powers so that general and regional governments are each within a sphere, co-ordinate and independent. He wants further to conclude that within federal system, each government should be limited to its own sphere and within that sphere, should be independent of others. K.C Wheare formulation of federal government is the best.

The fundamental feature of a federation is the formal division of governmental powers by a constitution between constituent states and the federal government. In real federalism, the state governments have power to pass law on security of lives and property of their various state. The second important feature of a federal state is that constitution of the federation is supreme.

Item 45, Second Schedule, Part 1, Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999, as amended provides for police and other governmental security services. This means that it is only the Federal government of Nigeria that can provide for police and other government security services. This is aberration to real federalism.

In all federalisms all over the world, both the federal and state governments have their own police. For instance, in the United States of America, the federal government has the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) whilst the state governments have their own state police. In Nigeria, the police belong to the federal government. The argument in favour of the federal police in Nigeria has been the fear that state Governors will use the state police as an instrument of oppression of political opponents and of minority groups within their state.

Now that the federal police has failed to protect lives and property of Nigerians as a result of the collapsing federal security apparatus, there is nothing wrong with state governments opting for supportive security initiatives to protect lives and property of citizens in their various states.

The Nigerian police is inadequate and incompetent to manage crime and criminalities head on. Herdsmen, Boko Haram, kidnapping, armed robbery and other social vices among other

criminal activities appear to overwhelm the Nigerian police which by many standards have not been able to live up to their responsibilities.

Nigerians no longer have security of their lives and property. They are molested in pursuit of their occupation by which they earn their living. They are not free to use the road because of high crime rates. The police can no longer guarantee security of life and property. This is reason why many Nigerians have now resorted to self-help to protect their own lives and property. Against this backdrop, supportive security initiatives are very key to protecting lives and property in Nigeria.

Some Cases of Insecurity in Nigeria

In the North East geo-political zone of Nigeria, in Borno state, no fewer than 19 persons were killed by Boko Haram insurgents. An aid worker at a camp for Internally Displaced Persons (I.D.Ps) in Monguno, a town in Borno state, said hundreds of survivors from villages in the area have fled to the Internally Displaced Persons (I.D.Ps) camp. This is even as the army denied reports that fifty (50) soldiers lost to Boko Haram insurgents. The attack took place in the early hours. Militants were spotted around the village three days before their attack and that residents informed soldiers stationed in the nearby town of Gudumbali but lamented that no action was taken. Boko Haram fighters, according to Reuters reportedly arrived in trucks firing guns and rockets propelled grenades. The attack came weeks after many soldiers were killed in an ambush in the North-East as Boko Haram has continued to carry out attacks in the region, despite efforts of the government to subdue the group. (Eruke, 2020).

Four persons were on the 3rd day of March, 2020 morning were reportedly hacked to death by suspected herdsman who injured several persons and also abducted six others at Waya community, Jato-Aka in Kwande Local Government Area of Benue state. Also, several persons sustained serious injuries after Tse-Keleke and New city both in Guma Local Government Area were attacked by suspected herds men, who were reported to have taken over the communities. These attacks came on the heels of the recent outcry by the government and people of the state over the massive influx of armed herdsmen into parts of the state. It was reported that the marauders stormed the Kwande Local Government Area with large herds of cattle and started shooting sporadically at the people they met in the village and at the bank of the river in the community. For many days these armed-to-the-teeth herdsmen have been roaming the villages with their cattle and the people have been crying out but nobody heard their cry until when herdsmen came again and started shooting at everybody they saw, killing four persons and abducting six others in their community and river bank where they took their cattle to drink water. (Daru, 2020(a)).

In the North Central region of Nigeria, in Benue state, the Benue state Expanded Security Council meeting on the 6th day of March, 2021 placed a ₦5 million (Five million Naira) bounty for any valid information that would lead to the arrest of the masterminds of the

murder of Chief Terkara Suswan, who was assassinated on the 4th day of March, 2021 by armed men at Anyiin in Logo Local Government Area of the state. (Duru, 2021).

Again, a priest of Otukpo Catholic Diocese, Rev. Father David Echioda was kidnapped in Allan Akpa community in Otukpo Local Government Area of Benue state by unknown gunmen. The priest was kidnapped while on his way from Utonkon in Ado Local Government Area of Benue state where he had gone on a missionary assignment. The Vicar-General of the diocese and priest in charge of St. Bernard's Catholic Church, Uguwu Okpoga, in Okpokwu Local Government Area of the state was six years ago kidnapped and later murdered by his abductors. (Dura, 2020(b)). In Niger state, school boys were abducted by bandits and were in captivity in the forest starving in another state. (Sobowale, 2021).

In another development, a final year student of college of Education, Zaria, nine children and three others were reportedly abducted by bandits that invaded Erena town in Shiroro Local Government Area of Niger state on the 3rd day of March, 2021. It was gathered that the bandits stormed the town, riding on no fewer than 15 motor cycles about 8 p.m while some reportedly stayed back at a distance from Erena town keeping watch. The bandit demanded the sum of 100 million Naira.

In the North West region of Nigeria, the rate homicides are committed has reached unacceptable proportion. The rate homicides were committed, 254 per week or annual rate of 13,200, North-West geo-political zone of Nigeria accounted for about 47.5 percent or almost half. The North region was responsible for 80.3%, the south about 20% (Ibid). Kaduna state accounts for 26.8% of all homicides in Nigeria. This is more than all the 17 states in the south combined (Ibid).

Staff quarters of the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN) at the Kaduna airport was attacked by gunmen who abducted some families in the early hours of Saturday, 6th day of March, 2021. Locals near the airport said the gunmen were armed with sophisticated weapons, and whisked away some staff members and their families.

The report says it was not clear how the gunmen gained access into the quarters but some staff members of (FAAN) living in the quarters, who managed to escape said some staff members with their families have been taken away by the armed men, a local said. However, the number of persons abducted could not be ascertained even as some said about eleven were taken away. Two houses were said to have been attacked inside the quarters and the armed men later moved to the airstrip of the airport. (Wuyo, 2021).

On the 29th of May, 2019, Katsina state Government cancelled all activities lined up for the inauguration ceremony of the new administration in Katsina state, (Punch, May 24, 2019, page 12). The reasons were unfortunate attacks by bandits in some areas of Katsina state which led to the death of many people and left several others injured or homeless. (Supra). Also, in January, 2021, bandits invaded Katsina state and carried away boys in Katsina state (Sobowole, 2021) Furthermore, gunmen suspected to be bandits attacked Ruwan Tofa in Maru Local Government Area of Zamfara state, kidnapping several persons mainly women and children. Some residents who managed to escape the onslaught said about 60 were

taken away. The development came as the state government on March 3, 2021 declared a dusk to dawn curfew in Jangebe, following the mob action that trailed official handover of the 279 abducted students of Government Girl's Secondary school, who were set free by their abductors to their parents. Residents also said that the bandits also set ablaze many houses and vehicles in the attack. In addition, in Illela Local Government Area of Sokoto state, there was killing of about 10 villagers and kidnapping of a man on the 3rd day of March, 2021. (Aliu 2021).

Parents of the 39 abducted students Federal College of Forestry Mechanisation in Mando Igabi Local Government Area of Kaduna State on the 25th day of March, 2021, appealed to the State Governor, Nasir El- Rufai to negotiate with the bandits and secure the release of their wards. The Governor had always insisted that his government would not negotiate with bandits, insisting that they needed to be completely rooted by security agents.

In Enugu, in South East region of Nigeria, the Enugu police command on the 4th day of March, 2020 paraded 31 suspected criminals who were involved in different armed robbery operations. (Adonu, 2020). In Benin-city, Edo state, the Oba of Benin, Omo N'oba Uke Akpolokpolo, Oba Ewuare II, urged the head of various security agencies in Edo state to track the menace of killer herdsmen across various communities in the state. The Monarch stated this when the heads of security agencies in Edo state paid him a courtesy visit in his palace where he expressed that the violent activities of herders across Edo state have become alarming, warning that if not tackled, could result in deep crisis. The Oba expressed worry over escalating rate of kidnapping, rape and killings, insisting that nefarious activities of herders must be checked. (Aliu, 2021)

In Ughelli, in Delta state, South-South region of Nigeria, the police operatives attached to the Delta state command have rescued 17 persons suspected to have been abducted by gunmen in Ughelli after a shoot out with gunmen. A hotelier and 16 of his staff were reported kidnapped by the gunmen. The 16 staff and hotelier were reportedly attacked by gunmen at the hotelier's building site in Ogor community, Ughelli in Delta state. The patrol teams of police operatives who were dispatched to the scene, engaged the hoodlums in a shoot out and rescued the workers unhurt.

Hundreds of Abraka and Obiaruku communities, Ethiope East and Ukwuani Local Government Areas, Delta State on the 25th day of March, 2021 barricaded major roads in the areas protesting the invasion of their farmlands and incessant killing of their indigenes by herdsmen. The latest of the attacks by the suspected herdsmen was the killing on the 21st day of March, 2021 of some indigenes.

In Ondo state, in South-west region of Nigeria, herdsmen destroyed farmers' sources of livelihood and raped their wives and daughters in their presence. The farmers lamented that they have been consistently been victims of the herders for the past 5 years.

The Catholic Bishop Emeritus of Lagos, Cardinal Anthony Okogie, has expressed concern that Nigeria has been taken over by bandits, herdsmen and kidnappers (Eyoboka, 2021).

The Effects of Insecurity in Nigeria

1. As a result of the collapse of the security apparatus stop in Nigeria, citizens no longer have confidence in the government. The citizens will say to themselves that they have the moral to resist the government who cannot secure their lives and property.
2. A situation where the government is incapacitated as regards to protecting the citizens from violence and invasion of foreigners, the citizens could resort to self-help.
3. A situation where the government which is charged with the responsibility of protecting the citizens from injustices, preventing other citizen from infringing on the rights of another citizen and enforce the rule of law, the citizen would not have any moral right to make positive and useful contributions to the advancement, progress and will-being of the community where they reside.
4. Where there is a breakdown of law and order, there is tendency for citizen in the country to resist the government and consequently engage in guerrilla warfare to dislodge the government out of office.
5. A country where the government fails to provide for general protection of lives and property, potential foreign investors to their country are scared and the country is portrayed in bad light to international communities.
6. A country where the security apparatus is collapsing, the citizens do not abide by the law of the country, respect her leaders and institutions, the national flag and legitimate authorities. The citizens who were once benign now lack love for their country, the spirit known as *volksgeist* would no longer be sustained in a country where there is a collapse of the security apparatus. There is lack of patriotism.
7. In a country where security apparatus has collapsed, there is always mutual suspicion among the citizens of such country, every citizen sees the other citizen as a potential criminal.
8. Another spiral effect of a country with collapsing security apparatus is that the citizens are molested in pursuit of their occupation by which they gain their living. The citizens are not free to use the roads because of high crime rates, kidnapping, killer herdsmen, and armed robbery.

Conclusion

This paper examines the collapsed security apparatus in Nigeria wherein, people kill with reckless abandon, maim and commit capital offences without repercussions such that it appears Nigeria is a failed state. This paper also reviewed some reported cases of cattle rustling, Boko Haram, kidnapping, rape, armed robbery and other social vices in Nigeria, and the effects of insecurity on Nigeria. This paper will finally proffer panaceas with a view to arresting these problems that characterized the Nigerian state.

Recommendations

1. Amnesty should not be given to bandits. Nigeria should not negotiate and or discuss with bandits. It is a way of funding and sustaining terrorism in Nigeria and banditry should not be allowed to blossom into high profile profession.
2. Maximum capital punishment should be imposed on herdsman, kidnappers, and other bandits found guilty by court of laws.
3. Information centres should be established in all the headquarters of all Local Government Areas in Nigeria where people could send in meaningful information that will assist the security agencies in their operations.
4. Security agencies should enter the villages to smoke out criminals from their hideouts and take them head on.
5. There is a need to enthrone proper fiscal federalism and Nigeria should practice true federalism where the federating states structure as was in the first Republic to encourage and promote state security initiatives.
6. All security agencies in Nigeria should collaborate with International security organisations such as International Police (INTERPOL) in protecting lives and property in Nigeria.
7. Security agencies of Nigeria borders should keep our borders safe and ensure that hoodlums do not find Nigeria as a safe haven to hide and perpetrate crime and criminalities.
8. The federal government should create a repository of personal data of Nigerians and foreigners' residents in Nigeria.
9. The federal government of Nigeria should decentralize the Nigerian police force as a way of curbing the insecurity bedevilling the nation.
10. The implementation plan for the police Act, 2020 should be put in place.
11. The Nigeria Police Council should be inaugurated with a view to discussing the internal security and policing challenges facing Nigeria.
12. There should be collaboration between traditional institutions and various security agencies including the Local Vigilante groups to improve security of lives and property.
13. The Federal Government should install broadband, high-speed internet access to boost digital security in Nigeria.

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