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## **Self - Help Elemental Policing Strategy and Unorthodox Community Based Security Arrangements in Ado Ekiti, Nigeria.**

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### **Abstract**

*The concept of security is seen as comprehensive activities that ensure the protection of persons, properties and the communities of people against threats and criminalities. The fear of uncertainty arising from most of the current trends of incessant reported cases of insecurity in Nigeria, and the governmental effort; though working to curtail the menace but still cannot surmount the challenges, has however informed unorthodox approaches in form of self-help elemental private security arrangements in different domains from the community levels to individuals self-help. To provide for an evidence-based in this regard, this study critically examines the justification, the nature and the effectiveness of this system in safeguarding the persons, properties and Ado community in Ekiti state of Nigeria. The interview data collection strategies were used where key informants were purposefully selected through the use of snowball sampling methods to select samples. The use of self-help elemental security arrangements in crime prevention and community safety in the study area were found to be very effective.*

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**Keywords:** *Community of People, Policing, Security, Self-Help, Unorthodox.*

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### **Introduction**

Peace and security are necessary basic human needs which double as indispensable requirements for the development and attainment of good quality of life for any human society. These provide the requisite enabling environment for citizens to live and work towards the social, economic and political development of the society (Groenewald and Peake, 2004). Indeed, at the mentioning of any society today, the first question to ask would base on peace and security, because most societies have been unfortunately overwhelmed with worrisome crime and armed violence; the human safety in most societies today cannot be guaranteed (Odinkalu, 2005). Regrettably, today, Nigerian societies are however characterised with insecurity, intense tension, fear and preponderance of armed violence and conflicts in a manner that suggest that the nation (Nigeria) lacks the capacity for internal security (Adejor, 2013; Odekunle, 2005; Odinkalu, 2005; Bach, 2004; Alemika and Chukuma, 2008). The record bombing of June 16, 2011, at the headquarters of the Nigeria police by a suicide bomber indicated the level of Nigerian palpable security challenges, (The Punch newspaper, June 17, 2011) and many others that have followed since. Meanwhile, the ability of the state to rise up to these challenges of insecurity is weakening, therefore, the use of self-help elemental private securities to filling the vacuum because the people need a secure environment to thrive; and ordinary citizens are now going about sourcing for an alternative private security arrangement to guard their lives and properties. This has also triggered concerns among scholars, religious clerics, government and non-governmental organizations (Iheajemuzu 1997:2).

Arising from these security inadequacies and in a bid to improve public safety and reduce fear and tension, self-help elemental private security arrangements have, therefore, attracted increasing attention which has also formed a strategy to improve public security and general safety. Though an alternative policing strategy, has been in existence for decades and even being widely practiced in North America and Europe (Brogden 2004; Ruteere and Pommerolle 2003), and indeed improved security services so far. Muller (2010) Rahmawati and Azca, (2006) observed that it is a worthwhile unconventional approach to wrestle insecurity and criminal activities.

Nwolise (2006) states that security is an all-encompassing holistic concept which implies that the territory must be secured by a network of security forces; that the sovereignty of the state must be guaranteed by a democratic and patriotic government, protected by the military, police and even the people themselves from internal upheavals. Security is seen as activities that ensure the protection of persons and properties of the communities against threats and criminalities (Krahmann, 2003). We can say the state is safe, secure and stable when there is no tension, and when there is freedom from fear or attacks and when there is relatively economic opportunity and internal stability, socio-economic development, protection of properties, lives and environments including the economic resources of such society. Therefore, the safety and survival of the state and its citizens from harm or destruction or from dangerous threats are sacrosanct, being the basic responsibilities of any state Adebakin and Raimi (2012). This is more reason governments create state police to perform the following statutory duties:

- i.** Crime Prevention
- ii.** Protection of lives and properties
- iii.** Enforcing law
- iv.** Maintenance of peace and public order.
- v.** Providing a wide range of services to the citizens (Akuul 2011).

By doing this, according to Akuul (2011), police has the right to use coercive means in order to establish social control with a statutory required in fighting crime through detection, investigation, apprehension, and prosecution of offenders in law courts as well as the protection of lives and property through proactive policing; but unfortunately this has been compromised because most of these constitutional and statutory functions were always being challenged when it comes to the management of crisis and maintenance of peace and security; hence the introduction of self-help elemental policing.

Arising from most of the current trends of insecurity in the country, these have informed unorthodox approaches in form of self-help elemental private security arrangements in different spheres. According to James (2014), tactically, state governments are now endorsing and adopting this strategy as a response to these security inadequacies in Nigeria, many communities, and even state governments are now making increase recourse to what can be referred to as self-help elemental and community based private security arrangements in a bid to improve their community safety, security and to minimise the criminal attacks. In Kano State, it is called the Hisbah and was used by the state government to enforce the sharia legal system. There were once the Bakassi boys, which operated in Anambra and Abia States. In Borno State we have the civilian joint task force, in Southwest states; there is Oodua People's Congress OPC. Recently, the government of Plateau State, Nigeria, according to Adejoh (2013) encouraged its various communities to organize vigilante groups due to the frequent invasion of these communities by extremists/insurgents. The Adamawa State government also one Friday, 14 August 2015 announced through the state media that it earmarked two hundred million naira only (N200 million) to engage private warriors to seek intervention towards

ending the state's lingering security challenges. Abdulraham Jimeta, the Chief of Staff to the Adamawa State Governor, in a media chat aired on the Adamawa State television in 2015 asserted that: part of the money which would have been spent as security votes, would go to assisting local vigilance teams and state security operatives.

With the increasing uneasiness caused by deadly attacks by Fulani herdsmen, Abia state Governor, Okezie Ipeazu deployed State Vigilante Services across the state to assist in providing security. In Cross River State, the Speaker of the House of Assembly while speaking during a courtesy visit from one of the members of a vigilante group in the state asserted the need for absolute collaboration between all security agencies and the people to better the state especially in the area of security. The speaker further commended the State Governor, for creating the state-owned security task force operation named 'Skolombo', and that security is a business of all, not just the government. He finally promised that the government would maintain a good working relationship with the vigilante group in the state.

In addition, local communities in Nigeria, especially in the northern part had formed self-help groups in order to resist the incessant militant attacks on their personalities and homes. According to Aljazeera report in 2015; In Kalabalge, a village about 250 kilometres from Maiduguri, Borno State capital, one of the village's chief Abdulwaheed, stated that they shall begin to take matters into their own hands in-form of self-defence because the Nigerian security was not doing enough to stem Boko Haram attacks in their community. Besides, in response to the surge in violence, the military also has encouraged the formation of the vigilante group in North Eastern part of Nigerian states, this is in support of the peacekeeping operation and for the man-hunt of Boko Haram members in the region i.e. Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF). In summary, this is to say that, even the military appreciated the use of self-help defence groups. This is a pointer to the relevance of the use of self-help elemental alternative policing strategies as an assisting hand to the military operations in the region.

In connection with this, everyone is now zealous to adopt the strategy because crime has become more sophisticated and deadlier even with every passing day as Soyombo (2009) pointed out that armed robbers now use dynamites and hand grenades to blow up the doors of bullion vans conveying money with full police escort and using rocket-propelled grenades to attack helicopters. Adejoh (2013) also observed that kidnapping which used to be a localized problem of Niger Delta area of Nigeria, targeting expatriate oil workers is now a common thing all over the Nigerian States targeting doctors, lecturers, directors, nurses, successful businessmen/women and other categories of people.

### **The Problem**

There were security inadequacies in Nigeria; it is an intense challenge. The society is uncertain of what will happen in the next minute, crime has become so pervasive that the country is ranked among the high-risk countries to live and work (Adejoh, 2013). The development and attainment of good life within the country is in question. The plight of the common man as regard security of his life and property is not heard. Indeed, the security of lives and properties should be considered a real business to any given government at any level; but it is unfortunately worrisome in our society today where criminalities are taking lead and the government, though working to curtail the menace but still cannot surmount the challenges. Whereas a government that cannot guarantee and delivers the society from tension and insecurity has however failed or lost its essence. Eboh and Obodoechina (2012) said that security is a big-time business of any state.

In essence, the society has suffered a severe setback because the social, economic, religious and political institutions which ought to be functional under a safe and secure environment have been troubled by insecurity. The report according to Adebakin and Raimi (2012) revealed that Nigeria is fast degenerating into the Hobbesian state of nature where life is short, nasty

and brutish and living has become an issue of survival of the fittest where anarchy is closing in and law and order are losing their sting; hoodlums, criminals, and terrorists have virtually taken over the nation. Okechukwu and Anyadike (2013) established that most Nigerians now sleep with one eye open. Nigerian communities have been violence-ridden and the consequences often portend danger on sustainable economic development in the country.

The Nigerian government has continually appropriated huge funds for defence and internal security yearly in her budget to the detriment of other sectors like the education, health, and agriculture and infrastructural. Even at this, the insecurity situation in the country lingers and seems not to end soon. This has, therefore, necessitated this research work to look towards alternative policing strategy and fill the knowledge gap with a view to proffering solution to this disturbing situation; because the police whose duty it is to provide security has consistently admitted as pointed out by Nigeria Police Force report that they are handicapped because of the combination of factors among which are: lack of resources, poor government support and poor conditions of service resulting in ill-motivated, ill-trained and ill-equipped workforce (NPF report, 2008). Other reasons for the poor performance of the Nigeria police were pointed out to include corruption and the fact the police are alien and structurally distant to people they are supposed to police (Okafor, 2007). Consequently, the varied levels of insecurity and probably the inadequacies and low performance of the police have inspired the emergence and rise of self-help elemental alternative policing strategies and community-based security arrangements across Nigerian societies. According to Baker (2007), this is so in the light of concrete proven evidence from other parts of Africa to effect that self-help elemental alternative policing strategies and community-based security arrangements have a very rich credential and amazing public acceptance that recommend them as part of the wider strategy of law and order.

Arising from the above, this works, therefore:

1. Investigated the justification for the use of self-help elemental alternative policing strategies and community-based security arrangements;
2. Assessed the nature of self-help elemental alternative policing strategies and community-based security arrangements;
3. Examined the effectiveness of the arrangements in crime prevention and community safety in the study area.

However, criminality and insecurity has impacted negatively in our society today, and many citizens have through this lost their lives and properties; hence any form of self-help elemental alternative policing strategies at any level is considered a justifiable public good and the very essence of state because it serves as a complementing effort to government in safeguarding the state against crimes.

### **Method of Data Collection**

This study adopted a qualitative research approach. Data for the study were collected from both the primary and secondary sources. The interview data collection strategies were used. The interview was conducted with community leaders, house owners/occupants, police officials, political authorities, researchers, civil societies, personnel from private security companies and vigilante groups. The secondary source included the content analysis of the relevant academic literature on security privatization, security, and policing system, crime control, community policing, along with the relevant journals in political science, criminology, international relations, development studies, peace and security studies and Nigerian politics. These were sourced through visiting of libraries and Google search.

### Sampling Techniques

Non-random sampling techniques were applied; this includes purposefully selected, and used a snowball sampling method to get members of the population. 50 Key informants were selected and interviews were conducted with the 100 participants who are readily available, agreed and volunteered to participate using convenience method from a purposefully selected area of the study. This enabled the study to extract the required information from the sample population. Interview information was analysed and the analysis was descriptive and explanatory. The uses of primary and secondary sources of data were adequate and quite relevant to the study. The related literature reviewed was based on the information gathered from lecture notes, textbooks from the Libraries and journals from the web search.

### Study Site

The study was carried out in Ado Metropolis in Ekiti State, Nigeria. Ado Ekiti is a capital city and administrative head of Ekiti State government and headquarters to Ado Local Government Area, in Nigeria. Ado Ekiti being the seat of governments encouraged people to move in freely from different towns and villages for trade, social, political and economic activities. Hence, the opening of the city to various categories of deviant behaviours leading to criminal activities where cases of theft, financial crime, threatening of life, assault, kidnapping, and fear of armed attacks and surge of violence between ethnic groups are common. And because of the overstretched nature of the police and inadequate maintenance of law and order in Ado Ekiti, these results in agitations and the intervention of private self - help elemental arrangements in crime prevention and control in Ado Ekiti.

### Results and Summary of Findings

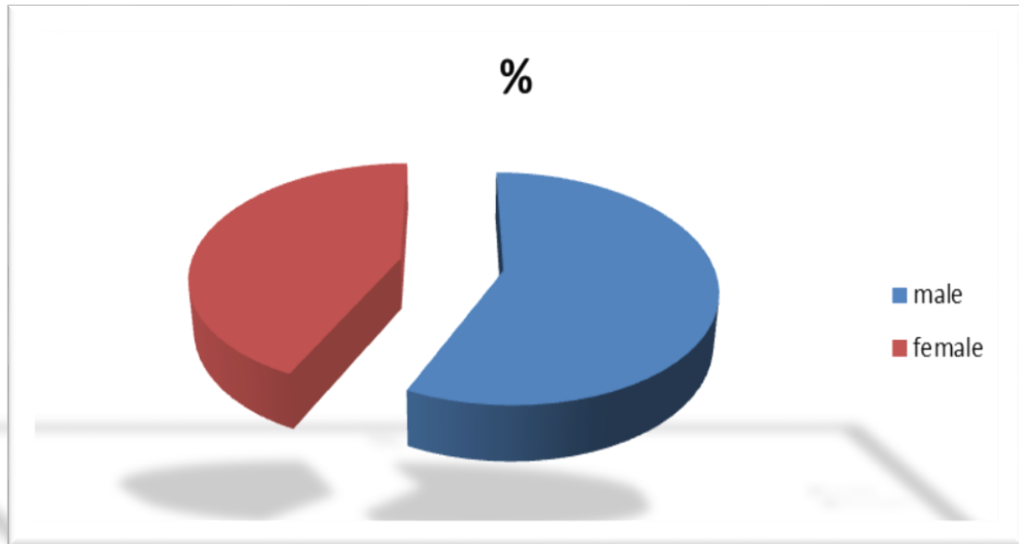
Profile of respondents

**Table I: Distributions of the Respondents according to sex.**

| Gender Distribution of the Respondents |        | Percent % |
|----------------------------------------|--------|-----------|
| Valid                                  | Female | 43        |
|                                        | Male   | 57        |
|                                        | Total  | 100       |

**Source:** survey research 2018

The table above and the charts below show the proportions of males and females who volunteered to participate and responded to the interview conducted in the study area. The sex distribution stood at 57% males and 43% for females respectively.



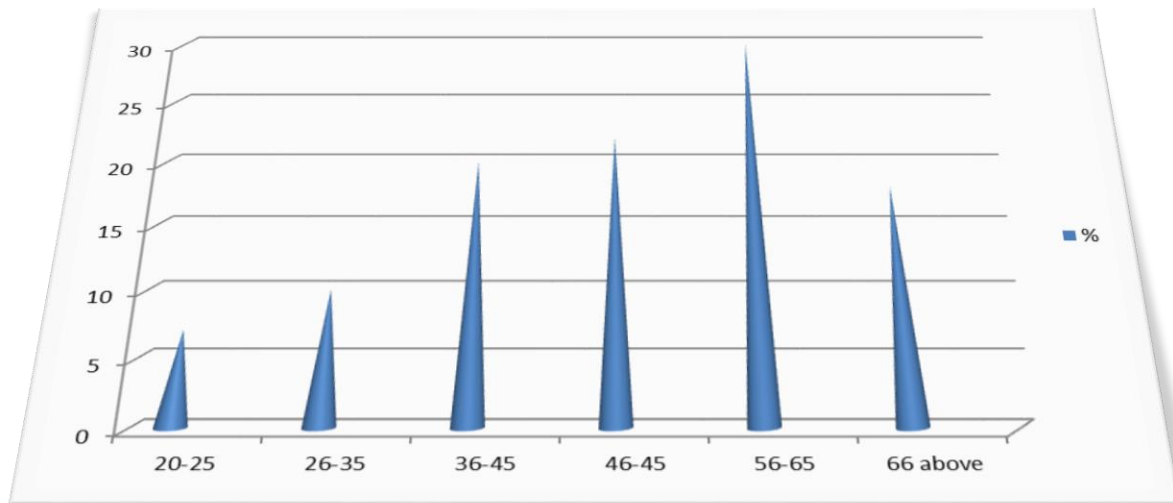
**Figure I:** Distribution according to Sex  
**Source:** survey research 2018

**Table II:** Distribution of respondent according to Age

| Age Distribution of the Respondents |          | Percent % |
|-------------------------------------|----------|-----------|
| Valid                               | 20-25    | 7         |
|                                     | 26-35    | 10        |
|                                     | 36-45    | 20        |
|                                     | 46-55    | 22        |
|                                     | 56-65    | 30        |
|                                     | 66-above | 11        |

**Source:** survey research 2018

The table above and the following figure show the age distribution of the respondents. This stood between 25 to 66years and above. The researcher concentrated more on the age that stood between 36-65years being the most active age that could give information relevant to the study.



**Figure II:** Distribution according to Age

**Source:** survey research 2018

The study exposed the urgent need for the use of self-help elemental and community based private security arrangements in Ado, Ekiti State. The findings show that private security arrangements emerged as a response to the citizens' quest for safety and security. Arising from this, the study found some broad categories of private security arrangements in the study area, such as community jointly organized night watchers (vigilantes), individual house-owner/occupant employed night watchers (olode ile) and the community employed night watchers (olode adugbo). The study also found that the government encouraged communities that were under incessant attacks by robbers and other disturbance of social order to organize self-help elemental private security arrangements to protect themselves and to alert the police in case of any hoodlums asserting that the police cannot be everywhere. Finally, the study found that the security situation in Ado Ekiti metropolis actually got better as a result of the use of self-help community private security arrangements.

### **Discussions**

**Justification for the use of Self-Help Elemental Alternative Policing Strategies and Community Based Security Arrangements.**

As a response to the security inadequacies in Ado Ekiti, Nigeria, many communities and neighbourhoods justified why they use self-help elemental alternative policing strategies and community-based security arrangements as summarised below:

1. People were of the opinion that security provision cannot be left alone in the hands of the state police considering the expansive nature of the communities.
2. It was believed that the state security personnel were not doing enough to stem incessant armed attacks especially that of the herdsmen and Boko Haram in most of the affected communities.
3. The capabilities of the state securities are not sufficient to provide enough wide range safety for people and because of this, they cannot cover every nook and cranny of the communities.

4. State police were believed to be corrupt or untrustworthy and, therefore, relatively unreliable.
5. The government does encourage communities that were under incessant attacks by robbers to form 'vigilantes' to protect themselves because the police cannot be everywhere.

It was believed that self-help elemental private security arrangements has offered a very reliable solution in community crime control and also has helped the government in its crusade against criminalities.

### **The Nature of Self-Help Elemental Alternative Policing Strategies and Community Based Security Arrangements.**

Arising from the reasons that justify the use of self-help elemental alternative policing strategies and community based security arrangements; different methods were found in these arrangements. For example, in the more cosmopolitan and pluralistic areas of the study; social relations in most of these areas are complex and most often formal. Self-help private securities arrangements were usually contracted out to people with defensive and protective security experience. They were being used as a guard to secure homes or offices as a guard gateman to man the gate and ward away the petty thieves around. This is being done through the traditional institutions or community development associations and through the landlords or residents of the given area. In such settings, it is being referred to as Community Employed Night Watchers (CENW) 'olode adugbo. They are mostly old men who retired from the military or the police according to the information gathered. And their identities are not always made open; they come in the night and close in the morning. Though, prior to their engagement, the concern community usually registered them with the police. Another means of self-help elemental security arrangement found in the study area is called Individual House-owner/Occupant Employed Night Watchers 'olode ile'. In this arrangement, the individual house owners or the house occupants employed the security; it is also being referred to as residential security guards or what most respondents referred to as "mai- guards" They were being used to guard and man residential gates and most of the times their presence are so useful in such a way that it wards off petty thieves. Findings show that the demand for this system was linked to the incessant troubles of petty thieves who moves around residences and most often sneak into houses/compounds of people to remove household items whenever people are not around or away. Most of this 'olode ile' work during the day and at night, essentially as night watchmen, by the implication of this, they provide guard services both day and night and move around the compound to deter criminal intent. It was also discovered that occasionally they patrol their neighbourhood to frustrate and possibly apprehend anyone suspected of a crime or of violating regulations on movement during the night. The use of night watchers was found to be quite helpful in stemming crime in the neighbourhood and their usefulness in alerting the police of the presence of hoodlums is laudable.

Another broad category of self-help elemental private security arrangements is identified as Community Jointly Organised Night Watchers 'vigilante'. This type of arrangement is most common in the less cosmopolitan area or the streets where social relations were still simple, informal with a relative interpersonal relation, and in a few of the cosmopolitan settings that have managed to retain a measure of traditional structures as well as in settings where members are somehow poor to contracts out security provision. In this regard, policing was mostly conceived as a communal activity. It is being organized in form of night-watch groups and consists of diverse forms of community self-policing initiatives which are organized at various levels of streets, groups of streets or quarters, and entire neighbourhoods or communities, to provide security for residents especially at night. Some of the groups were found to include



youth groups who organize often on a voluntary basis to provide security for their streets or neighbourhoods, groups of community members who took it upon themselves to safeguard their neighbourhoods at night. More often, this service was found to have provided a solution and as a response to the immediate security challenges the neighbourhoods where it is being practiced. Meanwhile, these are more rampant in most newly developing local streets all over the study area.

### **The Effectiveness of the Arrangements in Crime Prevention and Community Safety in the Study Area**

The use of self-help elemental security arrangements in crime prevention and community safety in the study area were found to be very effective. The result of the study on this are summarised as follow:

1. The night watchers in study area were mostly engaged to move round the compound both day and night. And anybody with criminal intent is being arrested.
2. The use of neighbourhood jointly organized night watch was said to have scaled down the rate of crime in most of the communities around the study area; hence it is found as a response to the security challenges in the study area.
3. The presence of the 'vigilantes' and other self-help private security arrangements were found to have eventually reduced the level of crime because their presence was enough to scare away thieves and those who perpetrate these evil acts were most of the time unable to strike or carry out their criminal intent since there is a time-bound restriction of movement within the neighbourhood where these arrangement is being used which is mostly from 10 pm to 5 am.
4. They were also found to be helpful to state police because most often they provide information for police and cover most remotes areas where the police services cannot cover. What they do especially the 'vigilantes' is that they divide themselves into groups and take turns to patrol their communities. They normally arrest and normally alert police when they notice the presence of criminals. This has been found to be quite helpful.

This study found that the self-help elemental private security arrangements emerged in response to the security inadequacies. This system flourished when there was upsurge in criminality or social deviance which threatened social orderliness (Amnesty International, 2002, Alemika; Chukwuma, 2005; Fasuan, 2017; Abrahamsen and Williams, 2005; Persom, 2010 and Adejoh, 2013).

### **Recommendations**

For an inclusive and reliable safekeeping, self-help elemental alternative policing strategies have been seen as a solution, based on the findings on this, this work, therefore, recommends that:

- a) Considering the overstretched nature of police services, individuals should be educated and allowed to be making their own self-help elemental private security arrangements to improve their safety, and security of their communities.
- b) This system should be encouraged for use as security on the streets in residential areas where police cannot meet the need, combined with the growth of streets and communities in some states.
- c) The government should incorporate courses related to peace and security in the school curriculum and also partner Universities to engage in research relating to crime control, safety, and community security.

### **Conclusion**

Following the situations of insecurity in Nigerian society today, and the reported cases of incessant communities invaded by criminal in recent time especially armed robbery gangs, thugs, hooliganism, violence radicalisation and Fulani herdsmen hullabaloo which has questioned the centralisation of policing or monopoly of policing system owing on the notion that police services are inadequate and generally cannot be in everywhere to satisfy every household; therefore, the idea of self-help policing system and private security arrangement; because unfortunately, the society has already metamorphosed into a housed of serial insecurities ranging from hostage taking, kidnapping, armed robbery, Boko Haram insurgencies, cold-bloodier murderers, anti-state militias, ethnicity tissues, religious conflicts, multiple conflicting political tensions and multiple conflicting political ideological crises. This has triggered the call for the need to de-centralize the policing system in order to ensure the effective and efficient policing system in the society in a bid to curtail the security challenges and criminal behaviour. Meanwhile, in most of the developed societies, self-help elemental private security arrangements have remained a very noticeable part of their security measure on crime control. It continued with the record of success in complementing the state security and as a prominent part of the society's entire security setting (Kantor and Person, 2010). The study, therefore, established that self-help elemental private security arrangements form an essential part of the security architecture of the study area and it was found to have been extremely successful there. Based on the foregoing, a conclusion is reached in this work that, instead of absolutely relying on the services of state police, the use of self-help elemental private security arrangements has thus been presented as a genuine initiative that can be comprehensively relied upon, and committed to improving the human security of the local populations.

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