

## The Role of the Nigeria Police Force on Internal National Security and Law Enforcement in Nigeria

Barr. SANI Salisu, PhD

[sanialisu70@gmail.com](mailto:sanialisu70@gmail.com)

08060955619

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

In order to effectively and judiciously address this contextual question, it is imperative to understand what is 'security'; then, whose duty is it to provide same in Nigeria and possibly, are they providing such duty/services effectively? if 'no' then, why?

In a very simple way, the word 'security' refers to the state of being free from danger or threat<sup>1</sup>. Then the next issue is 'whose duty is it to provide security' to the citizenry in Nigeria? This answer is also simply provided by the provisions of Section 14 [2] (b) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999) as amended, which provides thus:-

***It is hereby, accordingly, declared that: (b) the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government...***

In order to achieve the desired objectives, the Federal Republic of Nigeria deems it expedient to assign such responsibility to the Nigeria Police Force, among others, which is the lead internal security agency of the Government, to ensure such provision as encapsulated in the provisions of Section 4 (a) and (b) of the Nigeria Police Act, [2020] which provides:-

***The Nigeria Police shall; (a) prevents crimes, protect the rights and freedom of every person in Nigeria... (b) Maintain public safety, law and order***

In order to achieve the prevention of crimes which is one of the elements that creates fear in the public minds; maintains public safety; law and order, there is the need to have various, functional, effective, and well equip departments/section in the force for effective implementation of such onerous responsibilities. It should be born in mind that, such departments/sections indeed exist in the force and are tirelessly discharging their statutory responsibilities. Nonetheless, the last question is that, are such duties/services effective enough on the eye of an average citizen? then my answer here is as good as yours, most especially considering the various security challenges in the country. The last but not the least is, what is responsible for such unwarranted security challenges in the country. It is noteworthy to categorically restate here that, there are so many challenges affecting the administrative and operational capability of the Nigeria Police Force which this paper may not be complete without having reflection on them for possible but positive consideration by any security minded administration.

The Nigeria Police Force, as the lead agency in the internal security arrangement in Nigeria<sup>2</sup> for decades has suffered numerous and to some extent deliberate neglects and mal-

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<sup>1</sup> Oxford Advance on line English Dictionary, accessed via <https://www.google.com/search?client=firefox-b-d&q=meaning+of+security>, visited on the 04/11/2024.

<sup>2</sup> Combine Provisions of Sections 214 (1) and 215 (3) and (4) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, CFRN (1999), as amended.

administration both from within and outside the confines of the Force itself. In other words, the challenges or neglects come from both the government and indeed within the Force itself which at present left it barely in a comatose. It should be borne in mind that, members of the Nigeria Police Force have never had it so bad than at present state of the nation, when every day a police officer is killed without compassion from any quarter, be it from the government, civil organization or the community we served.

The provision of necessary working infrastructure is as good as zero in some states of the Federation. The salary and other working condition of service when compared to other sister agencies are seriously and grossly not only unparalleled but at par to your equivalent. To complement it up, the pensions and other retirement benefits have left many that are still alive into street and National Assembly protests just to survive. Nonetheless, let us consider some of the challenges in the circumstance.

**i. Shortage of Manpower:** At the moment, the Nigerian population is approximated at about 220 million with the personnel strength of the Nigeria Police Force also at about 370,000. Considering the United Nations projection of 450 people per a police officer, this number is grossly inadequate. Even though there are efforts by the Federal Government to inject new recruits into the system with a view to boosting the numerical figure of the officers and men for enhance operational efficiency, it is suggested that for a better service delivery, the number of Police officers and men should be increased to at least One Million, Five Hundred Thousand (1,500,000) considering the security challenges as well as the current demographic nature of the country<sup>3</sup>.

**ii. Training and Re-Training of Officers and Men:** Successful and result oriented service is one with well trained officers, thus, platoons of untrained or poorly trained officers with mix and uneven level of skills, knowledge, perceptions, motivations and interests cannot give birth to effective, efficient, responsible and sustainable security architecture in a country. Thus, for the Nigerian government and Nigerians to have good and result oriented security agencies, there must be coordinated and well deliberate investment in the training and re-training of the officers and men of the Nigeria Police Force and other sister agencies, as no single agency can do it alone and succeed. Thus, if we desire to achieve the organizational objectives, a close and holistic evaluation of the institutional wellbeing of our law enforcement agencies and indeed the Nigeria Police Force must be reviewed, new life wire needs to be injected through the instrumentality of training and re-training of the officers and men of the force for a better service delivery in the country<sup>4</sup>.

**iii. Inadequate Funding:** Nigeria should consider immediate and adequate funding of the Nigeria Police Force not only in terms of the salary and wages, office and housing accommodation for officers and men, but also other logistical service such as covert intelligence funding which is very vital in proactive led policing. Effective, efficient and sustainable law enforcement strategy can only withstand the test of time if both covert and overt operations are effectively funded like other developed countries such as the United States of America and indeed United Kingdom among others. This could be the only stimulating or enhancing measure if the government is desirous to delivering some marginal returns in the short- and long-term security strategy, as the current situation remains woefully underfunded and considering the security trend in the country it would be difficult if not impossible for any government to achieve its objectives without enabling security atmosphere<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> Bola Bakare, 'Perspectives on the Nigeria Police Force', *Vanguard online Newspaper*, July 7, 2021; Accessed at <<https://www.vanguardngr.com/2021/07/perspectives-on-the-nigeria-police-force/>>, visited on 04/11/2024.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

**iv. Lack of Adequate Transportation Facilities:** Transportation is very important in the discharge of both administrative and operational duties of the Nigeria Police Force. A nation which desired to achieve effective and efficient internal security must invest and ensure the provision of adequate transportation facilities for the administrative, operational as well as distress call service vehicles. Most of the developed countries achieve/record minimum rate of crime and criminal activities because they invest proportionately in the security sector. Thus, it is evident to anyone living in the country that, the Nigeria Police lacks adequate vehicles, patrol boats and indeed Helicopters for effective patrol system and responding to emergency situation, most especially in the present crucial period<sup>6</sup>.

**v. Lack of Technological Equipments:** In this era of globalization, where latest technological advancement and devices are applicable in every business of the day and changing almost every day, logistic touches on every aspect of the organization's operational specialty are required to meet up with the new trends. Members of an organization can only understand and make use of strategic planning and coordination, making use of new and better tools and good common sense to achieve its goals when it keeps its officers up to date with the new tools and working equipments.

However, it is a sad reality that the Nigeria Police Force operates under the most harrowing human and logistical experience in the world. Considering the contemporary global trend, the Nigeria Police Force lacks the required modern equipment, technological equipment and hardware to combat crime and criminality in the country. At the moment, crime detection, control and prevention by the police are still analogue-based in this age of technology. It is quite disheartening that, the Force could not have tracking devices in all the states of the Federation to checkmate the current global cyber crimes, the kidnapping syndicates and indeed the dreaded banditry elements looking for ransom<sup>7</sup>.

Similarly, intelligence gathering which is one of the major components in crime prevention strategy is no longer conducted in the olden ways, but by way of electronic devices networking, which are also virtually non-existence in the life cycle of the present Nigeria Police Force, it is not surprising that the force is still in the reactive approach in crime fighting rather than proactive strategies. Since it is the responsibility of the government to protect lives and property of the citizens, it is therefore time for the Nigerian government to invest heavily and ensure the procurement of those components and acquiring any material provisions necessary for effective and efficiency service delivery of the Nigeria Police Force<sup>8</sup>.

**vi. Mistrust/Lost of Confidence to the Police by the Public:** Where there exists a corporate social contract between the service provider (Police) and the beneficiaries of the services rendered (Public), the major underlining element that flourish, maintain and sustain such bond to a great extent is the trust and confidence of the beneficiaries to such service. However, in a situation where from historical antecedent certain factors tend to erode such trust and confidence from the mind of the public, then certainly certain adverse reactions either constructive or otherwise are expected to manifest. Nigeria Police which have been perceived from the colonial era as an element of oppression, thereafter considered as an agent of the state and subsequently, as certain negative factors set in partly from the internal and largely from the external factors, has to loss the trust and confidence of the public. This is the holistic

<sup>6</sup>Adegoke, N, 'The Nigeria Police and the Challenges of Security In Nigeria', *Department of Public Administration, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria and Zainab Arabian Research Society for Multidisciplinary Issues Dubai, UAE, (2014), P.31*; accessed at < <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/The-Nigeria-Police-And-The-Challenges-Of-SecurityAdegoke/bca3862b99d9de0002686d1d467a5489c2d1c1fb?sort=relevance&page=3>>, visited on 04/11/2024.

<sup>7</sup> Bola Bakare, (n.3).

<sup>8</sup> Adegoke, N, (n.6), P.30.

situation of the Nigerian Police in the contemporary Nigerian context. As the trust and confidence dwindle, the Police has to be sacrificed some times by the government it represents. Thus, to depend and protect with a view to remain relevant before the eye of the public, consequently, the Police has to lose it all. As the situation presents itself, there must be deliberate effort by both the government and members of the Nigeria Police to make all effort towards restoring such trust and confidence through dispassionate, effective and efficient discharge of its statutory responsibilities in one hand and effective media adventure in promoting and projecting such effort with a view to re-gaining the public trust and confidence.

**vii. Lack of Effective Interagency Synergy:** The government should create enabling environment for inter-agency collaboration and partnership through law enforcement conferences, seminars, long term and short-term field training programs in different manner of enforcement drive. By doing so, it will promote institutional cooperation, inter-personal relationship and indeed simplify law enforcement synergy in the country. This type of relationship is capable of not only creating mutual trust, cooperation, respect, sharing of intelligence and avoiding unnecessary inter-agency conflict and rivalry among others.

**viii. Corruption:** Corruption is a social virus that does not only affect the public officials but also infects the political, judicial as well as the other sectors of the society and indeed the functioning economy of the country. Corruption therefore is far the greatest enemy of any developmental process which tends to make government officials and public office holders mortgage the trust bestowed on them, abuse the function of their offices and ultimately negating effective implementation of law enforcement drive in the nation state. The Nigeria Police is part of the greater society and therefore not immune from this monster.

**ix. Political Factor:** Since the inception of Political dispensation in 1999, the political interference/meddling into almost all sphere of human endeavors in the country become the order of the day, Nigeria Police inclusive. The meddling of the political class into the affairs of the Nigeria Police from the recruitment, posting and promotion is in the alarming proportion, to the extent that a specialist Police Officer could be requested to be made either an *aid de Camp* (ADC) or security officer to a Governor and there is nothing to be done by anybody in the circumstance. Similarly, this interference has reduced the number of Specialist Officers in the Nigeria Police as most of the young recruited specialist officers find their ways into General duty popularly referred to as convertee, courtesy of political interface<sup>9</sup>. In that, posting of senior officers in most cases are politically motivated, as well as posting to certain strategic places without having recourse to merit and competency.

**x. Lopsided Treatment of Security Agencies by the Government:** Considering the facts that, since independence, the country has to some great extent been ruled by the military officers either in uniform or civil regalia, hence, the Nigeria Police Force has been relegated and emasculated usurping their functions for military adventures and subjecting the agency to various forms of internal and external unnecessary negative stimulating risks with a view to undermining their professional and statutory responsibilities<sup>10</sup>. This was and indeed carried out through the appointment of subservient officers to the leadership position without having recourse to the merit and competency for the post, thereby making the head a mere figurehead having nothing meaningful to contribute even during the security and council of state meetings; underfunding of the organization; deprivation of the necessary working tools and equipment necessary for the discharge of its statutory responsibility to the larger citizenry. The worst of

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<sup>9</sup> Charles Omole, 'Challenges Affecting Policing in Nigeria', *Financial Nigeria Magazine* (2020); Accessed at <http://www.financialnigeria.com/challenges-affecting-policing-in-nigeria-blog-525.html> visited on 04/11/2024.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

this treatment is what is obtainable in the current dispensation where the nation is and has been in desperate need of effective, efficient, responsive and responsible policing, yet, the organization was deprived of even the basic working tools, emasculating the professional competence of its members and relegating the entire agency to appear as irrelevant and liability to the nation thereby losing all the credit and credibility it use to have before the average Nigerian citizen, while few other sister agencies are provided with all their demands yet the security of the nation remain elusive.

## **2. STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS OF THE ORGANIZATION:**

The Nigeria Police Force is a service driven organization, hence, Poor perception, mistrust and lack of public confidence could be the worst form of weakness appraisal it can have from the people it serves. While a little sense of appreciation and consolation will go a long way in boosting the morale of the rank and file and galvanize their operational efficiency. This was demonstrated on 29<sup>th</sup> Sept, 2021, by the Lagos State Governor, Mr. Babajide Sanwo- Olu, reacting to the merciless killing of a Chief Superintendent of Police, attached to 'B' Dept, Lagos State Police Command, Csp Kazeem Abonde who was killed in Ajao Housing Estate, in Isolo Local Council Development Area of Lagos State by Okada riders while responding to distress call<sup>11</sup>. The Governor while lamenting on the incident stated that:

*'This is to encourage our law enforcement agents that we will always stand by them as they carry out their duties and, at the same time, send a strong signal to criminals that any attack on our officers will not go unpunished. Such display of savagery as the one in which CSP Abonde died will not be allowed in our state, no matter the circumstances,'*

However, negative perception, ceaseless condemnation and incriminations will continue to dampen and inhibits the morale of the Police Officers and men which in turn could impact negatively on their operational conduct. In other words, public condemnation, mistrust and lack of confidence in the Nigeria Police Force could be and indeed is the major weakness of the Force, while public appreciation and support could be the major strength of the members of the Force.

## **3. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

After a very careful and realistic itemization and evaluation of the aforementioned hybrids of some of the current challenges militating against the administrative and operational conduct of the Nigeria Police Force, it is humbly recommended that, the Nigerian government should make deliberate effort in addressing the enumerated problems and ensure that the Nigeria Police Trust Fund which was created for the purpose of catering for the problems of the Nigeria Police with yet no meaningful impact on the ground, should not be left to the hands of unpatriotic and overzealous politicians who are out to enrich themselves to the detriment of the Nigerian citizens and indeed the purpose it was created for.

## **4. CONCLUSION**

As earlier observed, the problems of corruption, inadequate funding, shortage of manpower, training and retraining of officers and men, provision of technological equipment, among

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<sup>11</sup> Vanguard online News Paper, 'Sanwo-Olu Vows to Hunt Killers of Chief of Police' 29<sup>th</sup> Sept, 2021; accessed at <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2021/09/sanwo-olu-vows-to-hunt-killers-of-police-chief/> visited on 04/11/2024

others, that are necessary for the effective discharge of the officer's statutory responsibility are urgently needed to be addressed in the circumstance. In order to achieve the desired objectives, adequate funding, political will on the part of the government, as well as addressing all the aforementioned enumerated problems are essential if and only if the internal security arrangement of the country is desired to be normalized in the circumstance.



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