

# Non-State Security Sector in Nigeria

## Trends and Challenges

Ndubuisi N Nwokolo  
July 2020

→ In both failed and relatively successful states, non-state security complements the state's security efforts.

→ The non-state security proliferated in the country, because of the state's security failure to attain security, fails in professionalism too.

→ The consequence is rising insecurity challenges. Given that the non-state security sector has marked positive contributions, the country should professionalise and synergise the state and non-state security sectors.



Co-funded by  
the European Union



**FRIEDRICH  
EBERT  
STIFTUNG**  
Nigeria Office

# Non-State Security Sector in Nigeria

## Trends and Challenges

by

**Ndubuisi N Nwokolo**

Partner & Chief Executive at Nextier Security, Peace and Development (SPD), Nigeria  
Post-doctoral Fellow (non-residential), School of Government and Society, University of  
Birmingham, United Kingdom  
[nnwokolo@nextierspd.com](mailto:nnwokolo@nextierspd.com), [n.n.nwokolo@bham.ac.uk](mailto:n.n.nwokolo@bham.ac.uk)

**Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) Nigeria**

# ©Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) Nigeria

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying and recording or by any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers and author.

ISBN 978-978-8449-63-8

Published in 2020 by Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung in collaboration with the Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre and co-funded by the European Union

Copy-edited by Chizoba Vivian Nwuzor

Printed by Muhamasaid Commercial Press

# Contents

	Pages
Acknowledgements	
Abstract	1
1 Introduction	1
2 The Non-State Security Institutions in Nigeria	2
2.1 The Proliferation of Informal Non-State Security Actors	
2.2 Overview and Nature of Operation of Non-State Security Organisations in Nigeria	
2.3 Role of State in Promoting Non-State Security Sector in Nigeria	
3 Issues and Challenges of Non-State Security Outfits in Nigeria	11
a) Complaints and Cases of Power Abuse and Human Rights Violations	
b) The Legality of the Non-State Security Actors	
c) Hitches in Collaboration	
d) Organisational Structure and Management	
4 Case for Justification of Non-State Security Actors	13
5 Conclusion and Recommendations	16
a) Regulating the Non-State Security Actors	
b) Provision of Relevant Equipment	
c) Formal Education and On-the-Job Training	
d) Cooperation and Collaboration between the State and Non-State Actors	
e) Registration of Non-State Actors with Their Local Authority	
f) Restricting Policing Role	
g) Defined Accountability Mechanism	
h) Appropriate Women Participation	
Pictures	
<i>Pictures of Some Non-State Security Groups from Across the Country</i>	8
Table	
<i>Profile of Non-State Security Providers in Some Selected States of Nigeria</i>	9
References	18



## Acknowledgements

As part of the need to promote the causes for citizens' participatory and democratic governance, welfare, peace, justice and overall human development, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES), Nigeria office, in collaboration with the Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC) embarked on this project of analysing security issues in Nigeria. The project is co-funded by the European Union (EU). The CISLAC is a non-governmental organisation committed to advocacy, information sharing, research and capacity building to strengthen civil society on legislative process for policy decisions and good governance. The EU promotes causes of peace, reconciliation, democracy and human rights.

This analysis titled *Non-State Security Sector in Nigeria: Trends and Challenges*, written by Dr Ndubuisi N Nwokolo, is number 4 of 6 analyses. The other analyses of this series are:

**Analysis 1:**

*Inclusive Participation in Nigeria's Security Sector: Trends and Opportunities* by Dr Iro Aghedo

**Analysis 2:**

*Towards an Accountable Security Sector in Nigeria* by Dr Abdulwahab Ademola Lawal

**Analysis 3:**

*Institutional Capacity and Capability of Nigeria's Security Sector* by Dr Wilson O V Ijide

**Analysis 5:**

*Nigeria's Security Architecture for the Future: State of National Security Agencies' Coordination and Cooperation* by Brig Gen Saleh Bala (Rtd)

**Analysis 6:**

*Policing, Police and the Feasibility of Their Reform in Nigeria* by Dr Chris M A Kwaja

Our immense gratitude to the authors for their incisive contributions. Many thanks to the Project Managers at FES, Mr Chidiebere Ugwu, Ms Judith Obia and Ms Ose Imhansoloeva, who coordinated the project. We also thank Chizoba Vivian Nwuzor, who reviewed, copyedited and prepared the manuscripts for publication, for the insightful suggestions for the works. We also thank Chinedu Peter Nebo, who proofread the reviewed manuscripts.

The rising intensity of insecurity challenges in Nigeria necessitates the quest for effective and efficient security. The ideal expectation is that the country reflects the findings of the analytical discourses in its security reform as evidence-based decisions.

**Ulrich Thum**

Resident Representative,  
Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Nigeria  
July 2020



# Non-State Security Sector in Nigeria

## Trends and Challenges

### Abstract

The rising insecurity in the country is worrisome, necessitating the proliferation of non-state security actors to fill the gaps in security delivery where the state has not provided or operates with low strength. While the non-state security sector may neither be historically new nor used only in fragile, conflict, failing or failed states, the drivers of its growth differ from country to country. For Nigeria, it is mostly driven by weak state syndrome and governance failure. The failure continues to affect the performance and management of state security institutions necessitating this investigative study. This study finds that the continuous growth of ungoverned spaces, mostly rural areas and township slums, have led the state governments, street associations, local rural communities, individuals etc., to establish and fund their own security. The powers backing such arrangement depend on where each establisher(s)'s authority is derived from. The discourse argued that while there is no consensus on the debate on the legality or illegality of the non-state security organisations, they have helped in improving security, but notwithstanding, have in many cases committed illegal acts by breaching fundamental human rights of the citizens. Yet, people use the non-state security services because they have more confidence in them than they have in the state-provided security. In conclusion, there are lessons for the state, non-state and other stakeholders in security on the need to build synergy among the providers for effective policing.

**Keywords:** State Security, Non-State Security, Insecurity, Policing, Nigeria, Ungoverned Space, Communities and Vigilante Organisations

### 1 Introduction

Security delivery to the citizens and residents in every country remains one of the main constitutional and fundamental functions of a state. Unfortunately, the failure to provide and/or meet such functions by a state are obvious manifestations of the state's weakness, which gives rise to the emergence of alternative security providers aside from the state. The alternative security providers, often called non-state security actors, are in forms of formal, informal, community-based or private security. Some of the non-state security actors are armed and non-violent, while some are armed and violent. In the use and activities of non-state actors, instances abound where the non-state actors, mostly the armed and violent ones, escalate threats and insecurity.

In recent years, the discourse on non-state security provisions has theoretically and empirically grown wider in literature and practice

due to its proliferation and the increasing need to improve access to justice and security (Higate and Utas 2017; Albrecht, Kyed, Isser and Harper 2011; Baker 2002). There are different assertions and interpretations of why and how non-state security operates, especially in many fragile and developing countries. Non-state security, in terms of community policing, is a policing development to restore community confidence in the police, improve social protection and adherence to human rights (Denney and Jenkins 2013: 6). Hence, one of the reasons for the rise of non-state security is weak state syndrome, where a state has less ability to fulfil its constitutional mandate as observed in most African and developing countries. However, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) and the Catholic Organization for Relief and Development Aid (Cordaid) in their new series on securing legitimate stability in the Central African Republic (CAR) and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) reported that the

population desires the state to be strengthened in the provision of security and justice. The people of CAR and DRC preferred the state over non-state and informal actors in the provision of security and justice (SIPRI 2019). Some of such groups are motivated or rise in agitation for security and justice (Menkhaus 2007) and so are illegal where the constitution does not authorise them, or where they are authorised, they slide to illegal, informal and violent activities.

The non-state security sector is not only attracted to weak and fragile states but is also important to strong and stable states. In well-governed and developed societies, the sector supports the state security sector in providing a safe and secure environment for the citizens. It is a policing philosophy based on the principle that police officers and community dwellers partner together in such a manner that such synergy solves security-related issues at the community level (Mohanty and Mohanty 2014: 6).

Hence, another reason for non-state security actors is that they are constitutionally allowed to support the state, so not necessarily because of state failure. As noted by the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF),

*"Even where the state does provide for security and justice, people may still preserve alternative security and justice practices based on customary principles or local traditions and beliefs, because of high levels of local legitimacy: this can include, for example, customary roles for important community figures in security and justice decision-making; alternative dispute resolution mechanisms; and rituals, traditions or informal rules that affect security and justice in the community. In some states certain security functions conventionally carried out by public security forces have been outsourced to commercial security providers,"* (DCAF (2015).

For instance, the United States (US) with its large number of state-funded security organisations still accommodates the existence and operations of non-state paramilitary organisations (Obama White House Archives 2003). These paramilitary civic organisations are characterised by

hierarchical structures and leadership patterns, as well as oversight monitoring by state authorities making them legally and formally established.

The recent upsurges in insurgency, kidnapping, terror activities, banditry (armed robbery, murder, rape, and cattle-rustling) and other forms of criminal violence in most parts of Nigeria have re-awakened the need for non-state actors. For instance, on Tuesday, January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2020, armed bandits killed over 6 persons and kidnapped about 100 others on Kaduna-Zaria highway (Mohammed 2020). Such killings and abduction in one incident depict the state of insecurity across the country and leading further to the need for non-state actors. However, the long-run consequence of non-state actors is often more threat to security as human rights abuses and crime rise with the actors', especially the violent actors and militias', overbearing excesses in their way of operation.

The state security agencies have been unable to deal with the security challenges that lead to the emergence of the non-state actor, much less deal with the additional ones posed by non-state violent actors. Thus, the state's security lacks the reach and response to deal with modern-day insecurity and crime.

However, there are instances where the non-state actors have positively contributed to security provisions. In Uganda, the local non-state policing has been incorporated into the state structure, and in Somaliland, the elders complement the state policing (Baker 2017). Also, as seen in developed countries, they support the state and continue to exist. They are as well proliferating, especially in Africa, which is also witnessing more informal and illegal armed security groups.

## 2 The Non-State Security Institutions in Nigeria

Within the African continent, policing never fully conformed to the Weberian model, a hierarchically organised operation with formal rules and regulations, with power flowing top-down, because the then colonial administrations, which ruled some parts of Africa, relied heavily on local community groups

such as masquerade groups, age-grade groups and other institutions to balance the provision of security (Fourchard 2008). The groups pre-existed before the colonisation. The elders of the lands and communities also made some decisions on the security of their people, operating in an informal process, which Baker (2002) noted as a culture of self-reliance. Nevertheless, there is a consensus in the existing literature on informal security institutions that with the onset of the democratic system and the introduction of the market economy, the sovereign states re-evaluated their security expenditure, which in the past was substantial, if not the most important factor in the provision of security (Baker 2008; Baker and Cargill 2008; Goldstein, Mansfield *et al.* 2012). While the Weber model suggests a most rational and effective system, with less nepotism and corruption, which ensures that decision-making for the public is based on general rules rather than on decisions of a public official (Weber 1946), the post-colonial Nigerian state, like most other African post-colonial states, fails in advancing this idea, which in this case, includes all the forms of state security providers.

In Nigeria, the police force, the armed (military) forces and the intelligence community are the three core agencies of the state originally mandated by the constitution to provide certain security services. Today, the internal security provision and other public order maintenance are the responsibilities of the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) and other paramilitary agencies (see Analysis 2 Section 1 *Introduction* and Analysis 3 Sub-section 2.1 *Nigeria's Security Landscape* for the agencies).

However, even with the existence of these agencies in the state's security sector, the non-state security outfits have continued to grow and gain prominence and acceptance within the society due to the failure of the state agencies and invariably a continuation of the culture of self-reliance (Baker 2002). The state security agencies' failure in dealing with the challenges are attributed to many negative conditions including inadequate labour force (personnel), poor training, lack of modern policing and

security techniques, inadequate and outdated equipment, insufficient fund, low remuneration, low morale, understaffing of the state security sector against the population, language differences, arbitrary exercise of power, institutionalisation, lack of political will to reform the security sector and non-decentralisation of operations (Bashiru 2018; Onyeozili 2005: 40), and observably, virtually the same challenges listed over two decades (1999-2020). Indeed, the NPF, which has the responsibility of maintaining the internal security, has its commands centrally structured with control from Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). Thus, the country's commands lack the reach and response to deal with modern-day insecurity and crime. Such conditions often lead to ineffective and inefficient policing and security provision.

While not yet weighing the systemic corruption within the force, Ogbozor (2016), argued that the prevalence of the negative conditions, especially in the NPF, affects performance, that the predominance of non-state security groups becomes inevitable. The citizens are left with the option of alternative means of guaranteeing their security and safety. Therefore, the state's failure to provide security to its citizens is boldly linked to the growing trend of non-state security agencies in the country and most other fragile countries. Ogbozor (2016: 3) pointed out that, "vigilantes flourish not only in places where the state lacks the capacity to protect citizens from crime, but also where the state is believed to be corrupt or untrustworthy."

The country has the two characteristics of lacking in capacity to secure the lives and properties of its citizens and fraught with corruption in the sector (Human Rights Watch [HRW] 2010). Thus, this discourse is centred on the context of the fragile or post-conflict environment—where there are structural system and moral failure amidst efforts to rebuild, make peace or manage crisis-torn state—that the state is forced to outsource security provisions to non-state security operators. As opined by Zartman (1995), the collapse of good governance, rules and order lead to a situation in which basic state responsibilities such as the provision of security,

become the responsibility of those who will uphold it, in this case, the non-state security actors. In exemplifying the argument, Rotberg (2004: 6) viewed criminal violence and vigilantism in Brazil and South Africa as indicators of state failure.

As Ajayi and Aderinto (2008) explained, lack of confidence in the abilities of NSCDC, the NPF and other state law enforcement agencies, lead to the citizens' preference for non-state security outfits or vigilante groups over state security providers. The NSCDC, which was established mainly to protect public infrastructure, assist the police in maintaining peace and order, rescue civilians during an emergency, regulate private guarding firms, among other functions, has also continued to underperform in many areas such as anti-terrorism, protection of public assets like the oil pipelines.

## 2.1 The Proliferation of Informal Non-State Security Actors

Lyons (2004: 269) explained that informal security institutions, such as the vigilante groups, develop and thrive in a state's failure to protect lives and properties. The weakness or failure of a state has been described as a condition in which the state's capacity to effectively govern has been eroded due to a complete or partial collapse of the state's power or function (Wyler 2008: 4). Such condition could be seen in the incident of an estimated death of, at least, 245 people through violent attacks in January 2020 across Nigeria (Kabir 2020), the three incidences of the kidnap of over 100 school children without the security forces intercepting such operations and the level of corruption and human rights abuses (HRW 2010).

However, scholars and researchers agreed that weak states tend to be among the least developed and most underperforming in the world. For instance, states such as Nigeria, Syria, Sudan, Libya and the DRC fall into this category. Accordingly, state weakness and failure may be an adequate approach to explain the factors responsible for the growing presence of non-state security agencies, mostly, the informal ones in Nigeria. Today, there is rising emergence and expansion of informal security institutions such

as the Bakassi Boys, Abia State Vigilante Groups, Imo State Vigilante Group, Anambra State Vigilante Groups, Imo State Security Network and many more. There are informal security actors in virtually every town, village and community in Nigeria, like in most African states, relying and depending on their knowledge of the local cultures, traditions, environment, sensitives, local knowledge and legitimacy in providing an effective policing in areas without and some even with the state police's presence. As suggested by Baker (2002), the advocates of decentralisation of policing "might argue that for this reason, a strong police force is already in place." Security provision, in this case, cannot be left for the state alone.

Also, lack of authority in socially remote areas caused by detachment from the ruling elites have been attributed as the major factor for the growing trend of non-state security agencies in the modern and complex states (Abrahams 1998: 90; Derks 2012). Other scholars have rejected the idea that state weakness causes the increase of informal security groups. They, however, believe that informal security actors carry out more roles in relations to the state (Buur and Jensen 2004: 148).

The rising cases of violent crimes and general insecurity raise fundamental questions on the capacity of Nigeria's state security sector to discharge her constitutional responsibility of protecting the lives and property of the general population. The country has continually been besieged with insecurity, particularly, armed violence as armed robbery/banditry, kidnapping, bloody communal clashes (Odi holocaust), insurgency (Niger Delta crisis), terrorism (Boko Haram) and many more crimes, rising at the first two months of the return to a civilian democratic administration (Nwuzor 2002). Regrettably, over the years, the Nigerian governments both from the civilian to the military rules and upon return to a democratic government in 1999 and to date have continued to fail to deliver on the protection function.

Furthermore, the socio-economic dynamics such as deepening poverty, population growth, unplanned urbanisation and increasing



unemployment, especially youth unemployment, have in many ways increased crimes and criminalities, and thereby pose more challenges to the police. Because of the failure of the police to deal with these myriads of challenges, increase for alternative forms of policing and security provision offered by non-state security outfits becomes inevitable. The communities rise to provide alternative security for themselves.

## 2.2 Overview and Nature of Operation of Non-State Security Organisations in Nigeria

As Nigeria's ungovernable spaces continue to grow by the day, with government's presence receding to state capitals and major cities, most rural areas and some 'peripheral towns', often referred to as slums, are left desolate and with less or no government control or presence. Over ten years and on as witnessed by the people, documented in various works as Osumah (2013), Campbell (2016) and in the reports of HRW, Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), International Crisis Group (ICG), the United States Department of State's Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC) and United Nations (UN), there is vicious rising insecurity, intensified in the last five years, as a result of the breakdown (a failure) of the social contract of the state (HRW 2012; HRW 2019; NRC 2019; UN 2019; ICG 2020; OSAC 2020). Some regions of the country like the north-west, with states like Zamfara, Kaduna, Katsina, Sokoto and even north-central states of Niger and Kogi are experiencing much more increasing banditry, kidnapping and other forms of violent criminalities, especially in the rural areas (Ibid.).

In many cases, recognised non-state actors either contracted by the locals for a levy or who have taken it upon themselves to provide such security services meant for the state, even those with insurgent ideology, arise and hold sway in such places that some become informal authorities. By the day, the responsibility to protect Nigerians, especially those living outside the administrative headquarters of the states or local councils, is being ceded to the non-state security providers.

One of several specific non-state security cases is that of the communities in Tangaza Local

Government Area (LGA) of Sokoto State. While Maishanu (2018) and the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC 2018) reported them as 'appearing' and invading—further indicating the weakness and porosity of the country's security—Tangaza, other sources as Sahara Reporters (2018) interview with Mallam Bello Tangaza, a community member, had it that in September 2018, the Tangaza communities because of the absence of the state 'invited' 10 members of the foreign guards to provide security to them against the rising threats of bandits, kidnappers and cattle rustlers. The foreign security guards armed with sophisticated weapons were of Fulani and Arab extraction who originally migrated to the Niger Republic from Mali, Sudan and Libya. The guards successfully protected the communities. And in return, the residents accommodated the guards, gave their daughters in marriage and as well-paid stipends to the guards. These foreign security guards then increased in number, set up training camps, began training recruits, and took further steps to authorise their presence. These included collecting taxes on wealthy individuals, especially cattle owners under the pretext of collecting alms (*Zakat*) and penalising of herders whose animals encroached on farmlands. Also, they forced the communities to imbibe their explanation of Sharia laws and defaulters of this new tax rule and religious laws were chastised. The state government neither questioned nor sanctioned all the threatening and dissident acts of the guards. The guards' incidence happened not too long after the group called the Hakika had surfaced in Ngwurore in Yola South LGA of Adamawa State and Toto LGA of Nasarawa State in July 2018 (Leadership 2018; BBC 2018).

The north-east region is also besieged by the insurgent groups led by Boko Haram (BH) and Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP). With the Nigerian military not being able to deal with the violence, non-state security outfits like the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) made up of hunters, youths, militias etc., was formed in 2013 to assist the military in waging the war against the terrorist groups. In 2016, the United

Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) had the CJTF listed in the annexes of the Secretary-General's Annual Report for Children and Armed Conflict for the recruitment and use of children. However, in 2017, the CJTF signed an action plan to end children recruitment (UNICEF 2017). The CJTF has been engaged in security operations and providing security to camps for internally displaced persons (IDP).

The non-state security sector just like the state security sector recruits women into its fold. It is quite common to see women who work for regulated private security companies. They provide guarding services, helping to deter crimes. The BH jihadists also recruit women for intelligence gathering, suicide bombing and as sex slaves. The CJTF recruits women as members to work with them in securing their environment. In 2017, about 50-100 female CJTF members were helping to fight insurgency with responsibilities such as "conducting pat-downs of women in churches, mosques and other public places, gathering intelligence, and arresting suspected female insurgents," (Hassan 2017). The north-east has experienced many attacks by BH. However, through the efforts of the female CJTF members' successful intelligence gatherings, several other attacks were prevented. The same argument of women's involvement also resonated with the Niger Delta struggle, where women were part of many militias protecting their communities. As members of the informal security groups, they acted as spies, emissaries, etc. (Oriola 2016). However, there continue to be cases of abuse of women in the militia, even in the CJTF.

In the north-west part of the country, states such as Kaduna, Zamfara, Katsina, Niger and Sokoto have continued to experience banditry and kidnapping, particularly in rural areas. These states have non-state volunteer vigilante known as Yansakai. However, in Katsina State, the Yansakai vigilante fuelled communal conflicts between farmers and herders over grazing land and water. The Yansakai group took sides with Hausa farmers and started attacks on Fulani herders, tagging them bandits and cattle rustlers. There were reprisal attacks by the Fulani herders, leading to further escalation of the

crisis, which of course included the involvement of mercenaries of Fulani ethnic group from Cameroon, Chad, Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso and the deployment of Nigerian soldiers. With the failure of the NPF to handle the situation and the repression of the conflicts by the soldiers that went badly, there were wanton killings, kidnapping and banditry in the region (Punch Newspapers 2019).

The clashes have continued to persist that the ICG (2018) reported that the conflict was already six times deadlier in 2018 than Boko Haram's insurgency. This June, the governor of Katsina State, Aminu Masari, accused Yansakai vigilante group of triggering Katsina bandit attacks (Channels TV 2020).

In the south-western parts of the country, there are also several non-state security actors. Some of them moved from securing spaces to administering an area. One of the major groups is the O'odua People's Congress (OPC). OPC arose because of perceived ethnic marginalisation of the Yoruba nation following the annulment of the June 12, 1993 election, by the Ibrahim Babangida-led military dictatorship (HRW 2003). As well, OPC recruits women (Nolte 2008). Initially, regarded as a noble goal, but over time, the OPC became an ethnic militia with a notoriety for perpetrating violence against members of other ethnic groups, especially the Hausa-Fulanis and Igbos in Lagos and other south-western cities. With the rising insecurity mostly from the Fulani herders, the country got further threatened. On January 9, 2020, six (Lagos, Oyo, Ogun, Ondo, Osun and Ekiti) south-western states' government established with states' bill their security outfit known as *Amotekun*, a further effort pointing to rising insecurity and state failure.

Similarly, the south-eastern states are not left out in the proliferation of non-state security actors. The Bakassi Boys were a formidable anti-crime militia in the Igbo-speaking states in the southeast. Originally from Uzoakoli in Imo State, they were mercenary killers that fought for protecting their communities and dealt with criminals. In early 2000, the Anambra and Imo states' government used the Bakassi militia to



combat rising crime, giving them excessive power to be accusers cum prosecutors, judges as well as executioners (Nwuzor 2002). Their pronouncements were not appealed. In the marketplaces, the Bakassi Boys committed hundreds of extrajudicial killings, beheaded those they accused, that the Amnesty International (AI 2002) and HRW (2002) would call it a legitimisation of torture and murder. Much later, politicians hijacked and deployed the militia against their political opponents leading to even more human rights violations and extrajudicial killings.

The south-eastern states of Abia, Imo and Anambra currently have several groups including Abia State Vigilante Service (AVS), Anambra State Vigilante Service (AVS), Imo State Security Network (ISN), Imo Community Watch (ICW) and Imo Civil Guard (ICG). The three security groups, while operating informally, have enjoyed the support of their state government. On November 10, 2018, the Kogi State government commissioned a 3,000-man vigilante guard after its State House of Assembly enacted a law establishing the State Vigilante Service, to recruit, train and arm men and women with Dane guns and other light weapons to promote security in the state by complementing the efforts of security agencies in crime detection and prevention in the state. There were dissenting views to the programme by opposition parties, citing that it was established to be used for intimidation of opposition party members ahead of the 2019 Governorship election in the state (Dan-Imam 2018).

There are several other non-state security groups across the country. The *Table* (on pages 9-10) is a compilation of some non-state security services from across the zones, states of the country and their sponsors. Of course, before the year 1956 first registered non-state security firm, called Nigeria Investigation and Security Company (NISCO), there were non-registered community-arranged and individual-employed guards known as '*mai-guards*' securing communities and homes. The table does not have the non-state security registered companies and unregistered (private) services providing security

services to individuals, organisations and residential neighbourhoods. The registered security companies and privately arranged residential security actors are neither usually known to perpetrate violent acts nor commit human rights abuses like punishing or killing criminals, and so are not given attention in this discourse. The table did not include the Amotekun, which was recently established and backed by six south-western states of the country.

### 2.3 Role of State in Promoting Non-State Security Sector in Nigeria

The table shows that some non-state security actors are backed by the state, while some are established by communities and individuals. The use of such non-state security arrangements is undoubtedly indispensable in many communities in Nigeria. Invariably, Nigeria has continued to have a non-state security architecture along with the state actors.

Most of these security groups, even the new ones as Amotekun, despite their informal establishment, are provided offices, uniforms and vehicles by the state governors in the states where they operate. Their offices, uniforms and vehicles bear the name or initials, emblem, inscription and sometimes the motto of each group, making them easily recognisable (HRW 2002b); all the provisions are characteristics of formal operation. They patrol the streets and communities heavily armed and arrest suspects.

Interestingly, some state governments in Nigeria take further steps by having their state assembly initiate laws backing the non-state security outfits, giving them somewhat formal status. These security groups mostly, the continuation of the traditional and informal self-defence apparatus of the communities, are remodelled into AVSs of Abia and Anambra states, ICW, ICG, KVG, Adamawa Amalgamated Union of Hunters, BOYES, etc. and backed by the states, giving them formal recognition, unlike some others as the Egbesu Boys in the Niger Delta region and the Karare Youths in Gombe State that are not backed by their state's law.

## Pictures of Some Non-State Security Groups from Across the Country



### Sources:

- 1 Kola Sulaimon: <https://www.gettyimages.com/detail/news-photo/members-of-the-yansakai-vigilante-group-sit-inside-an-news-photo/1193579430>
- 2 ICG (2020, May 18): Violence in Nigeria's North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/west-africa/nigeria/288-violence-nigerias-north-west-rolling-back-mayhem>
- 3 National Light Newspaper (2019): Anambra State Vigilante Trains 40 Personnel <https://www.nationallightngr.com/2019/06/27/anambra-vigilante-group-trains-40-personnel/>
- 4 Vanguard Newspaper (2020): How South West Gave Legal Teeth to Amotekun <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2020/03/how-south-west-gave-legal-teeth-to-amotekun/>
- 5 Alexis Okeowo (2015, December 22): The Women Fighting Boko Haram. The New Yorker. A woman lifts her veil as she is searched by a member of the Civilian Joint Task Force in Maiduguri, Nigeria. Photograph by Sunday Alamba / AP <https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/the-women-fighting-boko-haram>
- 6 Xinhua (2019, October 3): Nigerian Army Rescues 25 Child Soldiers from Boko Haram. Photograph by Makama Sule/Xinhua. [http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-10/03/c\\_138446712.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-10/03/c_138446712.htm)

**Table**    Profile of Non-State Security Providers in Some Selected States of Nigeria

Zone	State	Name of Non-State Actor	Sponsors
South-East Zone	Abia	Abia State Vigilante Group	Abia State Government
		Neighbourhood Watch	Host Communities
	Anambra	Anambra State Vigilante Services	Anambra State Government
		Neighbourhood Watch	Host Communities
	Ebonyi	Ebonyi State Neighbourhood Watch	Ebonyi State Government
		Community Vigilante	Host Communities
	Enugu	Enugu State Neighbourhood Association and Watch Groups	Enugu State Government
		Community Vigilante	Host Communities
	Imo	Imo Security Watch and Vigilante Group	Imo State Government
		Vigilante Group of Nigeria	Private Individuals
		Neighbourhood Watch	Host Communities
South-West Zone	Ekiti	Ekiti State Vigilante Group	Ekiti State Government
		Oodua People's Congress	Private Individuals
		Vigilante Group of Nigeria	"
	Lagos	Lagos Neighbourhood Safety Corps (LNSC)	Lagos State Government
		Oodua People's Congress	Private Individuals
		Vigilante Group of Nigeria	"
	Ogun	Vigilante Service of Ogun State	Ogun State Government
		Oodua People's Congress	Private individuals
		Vigilante Group of Nigeria	"
	Osun	Harmonized Vigilante Group	Osun State Government
		Oodua People's Congress	Private Individuals
		Vigilante Group of Nigeria	"
	Oyo	Yoruba K'OYA Movement	"
		Oodua People's Congress	"
		Vigilante Group of Nigeria	"
South-South Zone	Akwa Ibom	Mboho Mme Ette Idung ke Akwa Ibom State	Akwa Ibom
		Vigilante Group of Nigeria	Private Individuals
		Community Vigilante Groups	Host Communities
	Bayelsa	Bayelsa State Volunteer Service	Bayelsa State Government
		Egbesu Boys of Africa	Private Individuals
		Vigilante Group of Nigeria	"
	Delta	Vigilante Group of Nigeria	
		Niger Delta Vigilante	Private Individuals
	Edo	Edo State Integrated Vigilante Service	Edo State Government
		Vigilante Group of Nigeria	Private Individuals
North-Central Zone	Rivers	Neighbourhood Safety Agency of the Rivers State Government	Rivers State Government
		Vigilante Group of Nigeria	Self-Sponsored
	Benue	Vigilante Group of Nigeria	"
		Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF)	Benue State Government
		Neighbourhood Watch	Host Communities
	Nasarawa	Nasarawa State Youth Empowerment Scheme (NSYES)	Nasarawa State Government
		Vigilante Group of Nigeria	Self-Sponsored
		Neighbourhood Watch	Host Communities
	Kogi	Vigilante Group of Nigeria	
		Enyidudu Community	Host Communities



Table Continued

Zone	State	Name of Non-State Actor	Sponsors
North-Central Zone	Plateau	Operation Rainbow	Plateau State Government
		Vigilante Group of Nigeria	Self-Sponsored
		Neighbourhood Watch	Host Communities
		<i>Yan Banga</i> (Night Watch)	"
North-East Zone	Adamawa	Vigilante Group Adamawa State	Adamawa State Government
		Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF)	"
		Amalgamated Union of Nigerian Hunters	Self-sponsored
	Bauchi	The Sarasuka	Host Community
		The Vigilante Group of Wunti	"
	Borno	Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF)	Self-Sponsored
		Borno Youth Empowerment Scheme (BOYES)	Borno State Government
		Gombe Vigilante Group	Gombe State Government
	Gombe	The Hunters Association	Self-Sponsored
		The Kalare Youth	"
		The Vigilante Group of Nigeria (VGN) also known as the Taraba State Vigilante Group (TSVG)	Taraba State Government
	Yobe	Civilian Joint Taskforce (CJTF)	Gombe State Government
		The Hunters Association	Self-Sponsored
		The Youth Vigilante group	Host Local Governments
North-West Zone	Jigawa	Jigawa State Vigilante Group of Nigeria (JVGN)	Jigawa State
	Kaduna	Kaduna Vigilante Group of Nigeria (K-VGN)	Kaduna State Government
		Civilian Joint Taskforce (JTF) also known as Kabala Concern Forum ( <i>Jarumai da Gora</i> )	
	Kano	Kano State Vigilante Group of Nigeria (KVGN)	Kano State Government
		Hisbah	
	Zamfara	Zamfara State Vigilante Service	Zamfara State Government
		Hisbah	

Source: Ogbonnaya (2020)

Constitutionally, it is the responsibility of the federal government to provide security to the citizens. Section 214 of Nigeria's Constitution establishing the NPF stipulates that no other police force shall be established in any part of the country. However, the Constitution's Section 214 (2a) and (2c) have that:

- "the Nigeria Police Force shall be organised and administered in accordance with such provisions as may be prescribed by an act of the National Assembly," and
- "the National Assembly may make provisions for branches of the Nigeria

Police Force forming part of the armed forces of the Federation or for the protection of harbours, waterways, railways and airfields,"

respectively. Thus, there are the military police supporting the armed (military) forces and the NSCDC that supports the police with commands centralised. So, questions arise on the states-backed non-state security operation legitimacy. Nevertheless, the state governments' justification in setting and backing up informal security groups is argued on the inability of the NPF to adequately discharge its fundamental duty.

### 3 Issues and Challenges of Non-State Security Outfits in Nigeria

Despite the effective and some successful roles played by the non-formal security sector in safeguarding many communities, their activities face many challenges. Their origin being mostly informal and given the constitutional stand, they are argued to be illegal. The overview of the nature of the operation of non-state security actors shows their operation is replete with issues and questions about their formality, ethics, legitimacy and most of the time corruption.

#### a) Complaints and Cases of Power Abuse and Human Rights Violations

The non-state security actors are mostly an extension of the traditional security structure. They are often established in an informal plan, without formal or written guidelines, and recruit mostly informally educated locals. Hence, they usually lack a formal administrative procedure. Even the NPF that has formal guidelines and recruiting formally educated citizens is often found lacking in operational ethics.

The non-state security agencies by the nature of their engagements and the style of their administration abuse power, violate human rights and fuel crisis between groups. The non-state security operators, even those endorsed by state governments, are often accused of performing extrajudicial executions, acts of torture, rape, abuse of women, being hired by politicians for kidnapping and intimidation of politicians' opponents, inhuman and degrading treatment of alleged criminals. The members of CJTF fighting insurgency in the north-east committed grave human rights violations as extra-judicial killings, arson and sexual and gender-based violence against women (Hassan 2017). The HRW and Centre for Law Enforcement Education (CLEEN) Foundation documented several cases where some state governments used the informal security actors to target and intimidate perceived political opponents. The human rights organisations described scenarios where senior state government authorities were aware of such

human rights abuses by the informal security agencies set up by the state. Those targeted were usually well-known figures, viewed as political opponents or otherwise seen to be posing a threat to the authority of the state governor (HRW 2002b). The non-state security actors tend to copy the violation of rights exhibited by the state policing agencies, especially, the NPF. Abuse of power and human rights violations have remained vital argument by proponents of a ban of all non-state security organisations that engage in duties meant for the police, despite the institutional and operational failures of the NPF, which also carry out similar abuses and violations.

These complaints and cases have been some of the major concerns to the public and the federal government, especially, since the return to democratic rule in 1999. To address the concern, the then President, Olusegun Obasanjo, on April 10, 2002, sought parliamentary approval to outlaw certain armed groups. The bill entitled 'Prohibition of Certain Associations Act' would clarify the position of the federal government towards armed groups and lead to firm action from the federal authorities. The bill states that "No group of persons, association of individuals or quasi-military group shall retain, organise, train or equip any person or group of persons for the purpose of enabling the group of persons or association of individuals to use or display physical force or coercion in order to promote any political objective or interest; ethnic or cultural interest; social, occupational or religious interest," (AI 2002: 23; HRW 2003).

The bill, according to AI, provides the dissolution and proscription by the President of "any group of persons, association of individuals or quasi-military groups which in his opinion, is formed for the purposes of furthering the political, religious, ethnic, tribal, cultural or social interest of a group of persons or individuals contrary to the peace, order and good governance of the federation and the provisions of this Act," (AI 2002: 23; HRW 2003). The Bakassi Boys were disbanded in Abia, Imo and Anambra states following police raids. However, other non-state actors, some backed by their state government or communities or individuals persist in the

country and the regional security network, Amotekun emerged this year. The Attorney General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, Mr Abubakar Malami, opposed the regional security network as illegal (Okon-Ekong, Enumah and Sowole 2020; Kupoluyi 2020).

### **b) The Legality of the Non-State Security Actors**

The legal basis of the non-state security sector is at the centre of emerging debates among scholars, human rights activists, organisations and the federal government in some countries including Nigeria. There is no consensus on the legality of the non-state security sector. By definition, some authors see it as illegal, while some others perceive it as legal (Rosenbaum and Sederberg 1974).

Vigilantism is not a crime; it is not technically illegal (Peeler 2019). It is not prohibited by law. However, legal action can be taken against individuals who carry out vigilante practices such as murder, but not for the mere vigilantism as it is not prohibited by law while it [vigilantism] is an act of taking the law into their own hands. Therefore, for vigilantism to be a crime, the context of the practices must be a criminal act, which is used additionally for classification.

Although many countries in the world retain a monopoly on violence or monopoly in the use of physical force and maintenance of law and order to the state (Abrahams 2003), there are few exceptions. For instance, the citizens in the Netherlands are authorised by the constitution to use proportional deadly violence to defend themselves and their property against unlawful attack (Article 41.1 Sr) despite their prohibition of carrying a weapon as in most other countries. This example suggests a legal justification of the use of violence for self-defence, under the condition that certain criteria that are subject to proportionality (violence must be proportional to the cause it intends to defend) and subsidiarity (use the lesser form of force whenever possible) are met. Apart from self-defence, the Netherlands' constitution also encourages citizens to catch and arrest other citizens who engage in crime. In this context, the citizens also have the right to seize any property carried by

the suspect (Article 95 Sv). Apart from the Netherlands, citizens elsewhere are to refrain from employing violence in response to a criminal act.

Beyond the case of the Netherlands, there are empirical instances lending legitimacy to the non-state security sector. An ethnographic study by Anderson (1999) focused on violence and moral life of inner-city suburbs of Philadelphia, which generated similar street code studies of cities of the US, speaks to the role of the effectiveness of informal security. Anderson further established that the approval of and recourse to non-state security sector arose in circumstances of the inability of the state to carry out its basic responsibility, which created a need for community members to assume, instinctively, following unwritten well-known informal street code (rules), personal responsibility of their safety. Consequently, the establishment of people's law—that is based on street justice.

Linked to the code of the street justification for legal basis, are the centralisation and monopolisation of the means of legitimate violence within a defined territory, which make up the central feature of statehood. The logic of state monopoly over the legitimate use of physical force was underscored by the fact that the strength of a state is the extent to which its elites can exercise control over competing foci of authority and eliminate oligopolies of violence (Migdal 1988), particularly in the rural areas that suffer neglect from the state and its institutions of governance and security.

In the case of Nigeria, the availability of arms has driven many people to venture into non-state security provision. With weapons, especially small arms and light weapon (SALW), there is the assurance that they can protect themselves, their relations or even protect their community as a free gesture or for a fee. They are preferred by their people over the police.

### **c) Hitches in Collaboration**

The operation of the non-state security actors is fraught with corruption, nepotism and lack of collaboration with the state security. The communities' preference for non-state security

actors over the police would breed mutual distrust between the two security groups. The non-state security operators would often accuse the police officers of being corrupt, while the police officers raise the question of the former engaging in illegal detention and extra-judicial killings of suspects. This situation hinders the possibility of both groups effectively collaborating and addressing the rising cases of crimes in the country.

According to Onyeozili (2005), government agents, especially the police or other highly placed state officials, stall and stifle criminal investigation, prosecution and other works of non-state security actors due to interest in a case. In a similar submission, Odekunle (2005) study for the Network on Police Reform in Nigeria (NOPRIN) and CLEEN Foundation, disclosed that politicians in the communities undermine cohesion using non-state security forum. The politicians take up membership roles in vigilante committees of their communities, using the membership as a ploy to protect criminals who work in their interests, especially in electioneering.

#### **d) Organisational Structure and Management**

Alemika and Chukwuma (2003) on the role of the non-state policing sector as a barrier to change or driver of change in Nigeria, identified some of the challenges of the informal security operators to include inadequate training, funding (by the government and communities), operational equipment such as uniforms, rain boots, identity cards, flashlights, whistles, standard/sophisticated arms and many more.

Olaniyi (2003) in investigating community actions for security in Sabon Gari, Kano, discovered that non-state security operators often encounter threats from hoodlums who use sophisticated weapons in their robberies. The investigation also pointed out that non-state security actors face a challenge of lack of cooperation and coordination among the groups' members. The high-ranking officers within the establishment do not respect some decision made by their superior colleagues. Therefore, the disunity within the organisation affects their operation.

Most often, even as found by Marx and Archer (1999) for a developed country like the US, non-state security actors face organisational challenges. Their recruitment and management of personnel, the maintenance of resources, incentives and motivation for the groups' survival are often not on the good notes. Other challenges experienced by the non-state security operators are poor screening of new members and bad eggs among them, poor accountability by the groups and the multiplicity of the groups.

#### **4 Case for Justification of Non-State Security Actors**

Non-state policing has remained a problem-solving approach widely regarded as one of the most significant developments of crime control and prevention. For instance, in the US, the approach has gone a long way towards preventing crime (Holland, 1994: 12). The NOPRIN and the CLEEN Foundation's sponsored study (Odekunle 2005), contended that local communities in many parts of Nigeria establish their security groups to protect their dwellers. The security team is composed of able-bodied men and women from the local communities.

The activities of non-state security sector involve community engagement and the structures within the communities. It should be a joint effort to identify, respond and solve insecurity problems in a community. Collaborative efforts between the police and communities can lead to the attainment of wider social, political and economic development (Adejoh 1993: 1). Neighbours know and protect neighbours enabling enhanced social cohesion, leading to safety of the polity. Engaging the community members in security team members is a form of job creation contributing to dealing with rising unemployment that is one of the major causes of crime. Thus, a partnership approach between the police and the community can restore the confidence of the general population and certainly result in a more responsible and well-organised policing at the community level.

The success of non-state security sector according to Adejoh (1993: 13) depends mainly on three key components which include partnership, problem-solving and organisational

transformation. These key components are essential features of non-state security operators, even for the informal ones in traditional African society. Based on this, it is important to understand that the success of traditional informal security approach (neighbourhood watch, vigilante groups) in Nigeria was mainly because the members of the groups were part of the communities where they operate, rather than strangers policing strangers.

Nevertheless, the failure of the state policing institution, caused by such factors as understaffing due to funding and perennial issues of abuse of power and corruption, in promoting peace and security in Nigeria gave rise to the proliferation of the non-state security sector (Ogbozor 2016). Thus, the increasing non-state security sector is an effort to address mutual antagonism that had developed between the police and the public force, and to promote national security, as a result of the rising cases of violent crimes in different parts of the country.

Another rationale for setting up non-state security outfits has been the complementary role they play with the NPF in crime prevention and control. The state policing approach stressed the efficiency of rapid response as the primary means of tackling general insecurity. The rapid response can be achieved with the locals in collaboration with the police and updating the police on information to follow up. Unfortunately, in Nigeria, it is observed that citizens hardly report a crime they witness. The citizens do not report cases to state security agencies, most especially the NPF. This hesitation is common because community dwellers hardly trust police officers. Also, they do not want to meddle in a case involving the police. So, to address this dilemma, non-state security operators can then restore confidence to the public. Given the rising crime and the many problems incapacitating the NPF and even the NSCDC, especially their small workforce to Nigeria's population and lack of trust by the community, the non-state security's necessity continues to be imperative.

As seen in the discourse, some states in Nigeria, integrated the non-state security groups with

their official security structure. Thus, the informal security groups derive their credibility and unofficial authority from the community where they operate. The groups increasingly play the role of state police. Agents that play such role not only patrol the communities where they are deployed but also deploy physical coercion against persons to ensure compliance with the norms guiding the community (Olaniyi 2003). Even where they are not established by the states' bills, there is this quasi-legal status they possess that people consent and obey them. However, the laws guiding Nigerian communities in terms of policing are not the same as the laws in the constitution of the federation. Thus, the subject of the legal basis of non-state security sector remains a contested issue.

The objections to using non-state security are because of the cases of their abuse of power, politicians' use of them as thugs, their violation of human rights and the tendencies of some of the security operatives, especially the informal ones, to turn militias. However, with the high incidences of kidnaps, inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic violent clashes and other crimes, establishing such outfits becomes morally justifiable. Also, the process of establishing the ones backed by the states' bills at their assemblies could be said to be 'a representation of the people's will', as they are passed into law by elected members of states' house of assembly with the state governors assenting to the bills to become laws.

The central theme of the non-state security sector is crime prevention and control (Skolnick and Bayley 1988; LaGrange, Ferraro and Supancic 1992; Segrave and Ratcliffe 2004; Skogan 2019). LaGrange, Ferraro and Supancic (1992) noted the positive effect as the reduction of crime, greater citizen's participation and satisfaction, improved police-community relations and social cohesion, improved flow of information from the community and enhanced quality of community life. Those are long-term effects on society at large. Nyaura and Ngugi (2014) added enhanced partnership between the police and the community, locality focus concerning securing the communal needs,



problem-solving involving the non-state actors and the communities, enhanced communication and improved community perception of police, attitude modification, reduced fear of crime and other anti-social behaviours.

The crime prevention benefit of community (non-state) policing as observed by Nyaura and Ngugi (2014) is more proactive than state policing reactive models (Cordner 1999). The proactive model of problem-solving of the non-state security is beneficial in crime control and prevention through discouraging lawbreaking, protecting likely victims and making crime locations less conducive to the identified problems unlike the state security (Nyaura and Ngugi 2014). This non-state policing approach encourages the participation of community members in actualising their potential to resolve complex crimes.

Studies showed that the state policing approaches such as rapid response and reactive investigation are of immense value to community members. Nevertheless, the studies revealed that the communities would prefer that victimisation be prevented in the first instances (Nyaura and Ngugi 2014). Therefore, crime prevention approach suggests that the interests of the community dwellers should be well safeguarded.

The benefit of an improved partnership between the police and the community is an essential component of community policing. Cordner (1999) suggested that non-state security actors should work collaboratively with other public and private security agencies when dealing with crimes and other anti-social related behaviours. Similarly, Wycoff (1988) and Trojanowicz and Bucquerous (1990) argued that improved partnership between the non-state security actors and communities would not only reduce the fear of crime but also physical and social disorder and neighbourhood decay.

LaGrange, Ferraro and Supancic (1992) pointed out that the advocates of non-state security sector derived their justification from the 'Broken Windows' theory. According to this theory, broken windows in an abandoned house, and the allowance of certain harmless activities on

the street naturally creates uncertainty and crime. The deduction from the theory is that once the building is unattended to, a window is broken, and left unrepaired, then, there is the tendency for the remaining windows to be broken as well. Similarly, non-attendant behaviour can also lead to the breakdown of community controls. The theory posits that community policing can protect such social windows from becoming broken. However, like the Broken Window theory copied by the advocates of community policing, non-state security may, in trying to reduce crime, focus on punishing people rather than improving places, in this case preventing the crime (Klinenberg 2018). And unfortunately, to this day, most policies aimed to reduce crime focus on punishing people rather than improving places (Klinenberg 2018).

Many overlapping factors as cattle rustling, proliferation of SALW, illicit artisanal mining, youth unemployment, poverty and inequality drive the proliferation of non-state security actors. The drive is initiated and compounded by those of the NPF failure (the weakened, stretched, undertraining, inadequately funded, inadequately equipped and demoralised state security services). Thus, the problems of the state security sector are like those of the non-state, which is a vicious cycle that needs addressing in both security sectors.

The questions then are: If non-state security sector stays, how do we control their activities in a democratic space? How do we manage their operational excesses, which in many instances infringe on the rights of fellow citizens? Will legalising their existence and activities bring them and their activities within the purview of the law? Will more proliferation of non-state security sector further affect Nigeria's national security?

Trojanowicz and Bucqueroux (1990) stated that community policing is a philosophy based on the assumption that changes today will make communities safer and more attractive tomorrow. This prospect can be realised by working collectively towards common goals (Segrave and Ratcliffe 2004). Also, according to

Cordner (2007), for an effective community policing, the policing agency needs to appreciate the opportunities entrenched in partnering with the public. Thus, the non-state security sector's prospects in promoting national security cannot be exaggerated, particularly as the sector brings the police and community closer and offers solutions to several violent threats and other insecurity challenges affecting a nation.

## 5 Conclusion and Recommendations

There are several explanations adduced for the emergence of the non-state security sector. Poor policing has been one of the core drivers of the proliferation of the non-state security actors in every part of the country. With the federal government centralising the state police and for many decades failing to deliver public goods and provide basic welfare and secure environment for citizens, the need to achieve such protection has arisen and being proliferated by the people in many parts of the country and even state governments supporting them. Contentious political elites have also failed to promote equal citizenship for all members of the public leading to acrimonious relations among citizens.

Following the growing trend and supportive positive contributions of the non-state security sector in Nigeria, these recommendations based on working to deal with the sector's identified challenges are necessary to manage the trend and make their activities more effective in supporting the state police in the country.

### a) Regulating the Non-State Security Actors

Modern policing is capital intensive. Hence, the likelihood of having the NPF as the only organisation entrusted with the duty of policing the country, while NSCDC having only a supportive role, is becoming counterproductive as their operations hampered by insufficient funding are not effective and efficient. Therefore, effort should be made to have NSCDC's responsibility of regulating the private security industry in Nigeria, to do more to regulate some known organised non-state security providers, while those who cannot be regulated should be outlawed.

### b) Provision of Relevant Equipment

State policing and provision of security in the country have remained largely less preventive in tackling crimes. This is unlike modern-day policing, which is technologically driven and depends largely on intelligence. With modern technology such as reliable national database, city cameras and communication equipment, cities are policed and protected. The lack of modern technologies reduces efforts at preventing and managing crime and leads to increased insecurity. As part of Nigeria's Security Sector Reform (SSR), the NPF, other state and non-state policing agencies should be equipped with modern-day communication gadgets and policing tools for effective and efficient intelligence gathering. This will aid the state and non-state sectors in rendering and improving their service.

### c) Formal Education and On-the-Job Training

Poor training is one of the major challenges of the security sectors in the country. That calls to mind that technology is not just about machines but better ways of teaching and learning, and simple acts of communication that yield development (Nwuzor 2018). Equipping the non-state security sector with relevant tools (training in moral, skills and equipment use) will help in behaviour correction, policing collaboration and increase the country's security. There should be a formal education and continuous training for members of non-state security actors by the NSCDC, as well as regular monitoring of their activities. As part of their registration and registration renewal conditions, vigilante groups must submit evidence of participating in continuous education. The training curriculum should be standardised to address all the relevant aspects of policing, with the emphasis on local intelligence gathering and the upholding the rights of the citizens. Organisations such as Justice for All (J4A) and CLEEN have relevant experience in providing training in non-state policing.

Education cannot be overemphasised as a need for democracy, good governance, accountability, better performance and overall human development as seen with the efforts of

the collaborators, FES and CISLAC, of this analysis papers and the co-funder, EU. Invariably, information or education is a means to training and learning. There is a need for emphasis on moral education. Education should make people have positive behaviour, detesting corrupt practices and engineering positive ideas. The power of technical idea improved through education, when not undermined, can drastically minimise and/or eliminate corruption (Nwuzor 2018). Corruption has been one of the long-standing impediments to implementing policies and development course. As such, patriotism and devotion to ethics are encouraged.

#### **d) Cooperation and Collaboration between the State and Non-State Actors**

Cooperation and collaboration efforts between the government and promoters of non-state security organisation such as local communities will help in controlling the activities of the non-state security sector, as well as in curtailing their growth. This is because such cooperation and collaboration will help in streamlining and getting rid of criminal elements who pose as non-state security actors. This strategy with the support of stakeholders in such urban or rural communities like landlords' associations, traders' associations, civil society organisations (CSOs), religious bodies, traditional rulers, community development associations, etc. will help in refining the sector. Every Nigerian should (through education and awareness) play, at least, a participatory observatory role in vigilantism while its members are strengthened in their cooperation with the NPF and NSCDC. *Analysis 1* of this Analysis series discussed the participatory roles in the country's security sector.

#### **e) Registration of Non-State Actors with Their Local Authority**

Every non-state security organisation and its members should be registered with their local government council, and each member be provided with a unique identification number and card. This is in addition to the registration by the NSCDC. This will enable the government to monitor and detect abuses when they occur. Vigilante groups who fail to meet these

registrations and the conditions for such registration should be proscribed.

#### **f) Restricting Policing Role**

Vigilante organisations and any other form of non-state security provider should be restricted to ancillary crime control functions. They should be educated and not be empowered to conduct any arrests or to prosecute offenders. This is to ensure there is no risk of human rights violation or power abuse. Rather, they should report offenders to the police and other agencies with the statutory responsibility for arrest and prosecution. This will also help in curtailing the elites' or politicians' control and manipulation of the organisations.

#### **g) Defined Accountability Mechanism**

There should be a defined accountability mechanism for ensuring justice and human rights observation within the non-state security sector. This will enable practitioners to remain within defined areas of their jurisdiction. This will also enable the government to mete out punishment on non-complying organisations.

#### **h) Appropriate Women Participation**

There should be deliberate state policy to involve women effectively in all forms of state-regulated or community-supported non-state security organisations. Enabling appropriate women's participation will reduce men's domination, which in many instances encourages the capture of such an organisation by influential members of the community for their selfish interest. With women, the culture of silence and conspiracy will probably reduce as women are more likely to oppose a situation that will lead to violent conflicts as they are likely to be most affected if such crisis ensues.

## References

- Abrahams, R (1998): *Vigilant Citizens: Vigilantism and the State* 1<sup>st</sup> Edition. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- (2003): What's in a Name? Some Thoughts on the Vocabulary of Vigilantism and Related Forms of 'Informal Criminal Justice'. In D Feenan (ed) *Informal Criminal Justice* pp 25-40. London: Ashgate.
- Adejoh, P E (2013): An Assessment of the Performance of Informal Security Structures in Community Crime Control in Metropolitan Lagos. *British Journal of Arts and Social Sciences*. <http://www.bjornal.co.uk/paper/BJASS>
- Ajayi, J O and Aderinto, A A (2008): *The Nigerian Police and Crime Control in Lagos Metropolis*. Lagos: Gbenga Press Nigeria Limited.
- AI (2002, November 12): Nigeria: Vigilante Violence in the South and Southeast. Amnesty International. [https://www.google.com/search?client=opera&q=Amnesty+International+\(AI\).+19+November+2002.+%22Nigeria%3A+Vigilante+Violence+in+the+South+And+South-East.pdf](https://www.google.com/search?client=opera&q=Amnesty+International+(AI).+19+November+2002.+%22Nigeria%3A+Vigilante+Violence+in+the+South+And+South-East.pdf)
- Albrecht, P, Kyed, H M, Isser, D and Harper, E (eds) (2011): Perspectives on Involving Non-state and Customary Actors in Justice and Security Reform. *International Development Law Organization (IDLO) and the Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS)*.
- Alemika, E E O and Chukwuma, I C (2003): *Analysis of Police and Policing in Nigeria: A Desk Study of the Role of Policing as a Barrier to Change or Driver of Change in Nigeria*. Prepared for the Department for International Development (DFID). Lagos: Centre for Law Enforcement Education in Nigeria.
- Anderson, E (1999): *Code of the Street: Decency, Violence, and the Moral Life of the Inner City*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.
- Baker, B (2002): Living with Non-state Policing in South Africa: The Issues and Dilemmas. *Journal of Modern African Studies* 40 (1): 29-53.
- (2008): *Multi-Choice Policing in Africa*. Nordiska Afrikainstitutet. Sweden: Uppsala
- (2017): Policing for Conflict Zones: What Have Local Policing Groups Taught Us? *Stability: International Journal of Security and Development* 6 (1). <https://www.stabilityjournal.org/articles/10.5334/sta.551/>
- Baker, B and Cargill, T (2008, January 22): Security Sector Reform and Non-state Policing in Africa. Chatham House. [https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/field/field\\_document/Security%20Sector%20Reform%20and%20Non-State%20Policing%20in%20Africa.pdf](https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/field/field_document/Security%20Sector%20Reform%20and%20Non-State%20Policing%20in%20Africa.pdf)
- Bashiru, A A (2018, July 19): Challenges of Policing Nigeria. *Daily Trust Newspapers*. <https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/challenges-of-policing-nigeria-261616.html>
- BBC (2018, November 30): 'Islamic Preachers' wey Carri Gun don Appear for Sokoto State. British Broadcasting Corporation. <https://www.bbc.com/pidgin/tori-46396278>
- Buur, L and Jensen, S (2004): Introduction: Vigilantism and the Policing of Everyday Life in South Africa. *African Studies* 63 (2): 139-152. Carfax Publishing and Taylor and Francis Limited on behalf of the University of the Witwatersrand.
- Campbell, J (2016, February 17): Northern Nigeria's Multifaceted Humanitarian Crisis. Council on Foreign Relation (CFR).



- Africa in Transition.*  
<https://www.cfr.org/blog/northern-nigerias-multifaceted-humanitarian-crisis>
- Channels TV (2020, June 28): Masari Accuses Vigilante Group of Triggering Katsina Bandit Attacks. *Channels Television.*  
<https://www.channelstv.com/2020/06/28/masari-accuses-vigilante-group-of-triggering-katsina-bandit-attacks/>
- Cordner, G (1999): Elements of Community Policing. In L Gaines and G Cordner, (eds) *Policing Perspectives: An Anthology* pp 137-149. Los Angeles: Roxbury Publishing Company.
- Cordner, G (2007): The Key Elements of Oriented Community Policing. *Regional Community Policing Institute.* Colorado: Regional Community Policing Institute.
- Dan-Imam, I (2018, November 10): Kogi Commissions 3000 Vigilante Officers. *Voice of Nigeria (VON).*  
<https://www.von.gov.ng/kogi-commissions-3000-vigilante-officers/>
- DCAF (2015): The Security Sector: Roles and Responsibilities in Security Provision, Management and Oversight. *SSR Backgrounder Series.* Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces DCAF.  
[https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/195675/DCAF\\_BG\\_3\\_The%20Security%20Sector.11.15.pdf](https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/195675/DCAF_BG_3_The%20Security%20Sector.11.15.pdf)
- Denney, L and Jenkins, S (2013): Securing Communities: The What and How of Community Policing. Background Paper. *Overseas Development Institute (ODI) Research Report and Study.*  
<https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/8491.pdf>
- Derks, M (2012): *Improving Security and Justice through Local/non-state Actors: The Challenges of Donor Support to Local/nonstate Security and Justice Providers.* Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael', Clingendael Institute.  
[https://www.clingendael.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/20120400\\_derks\\_improving\\_security.pdf](https://www.clingendael.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/20120400_derks_improving_security.pdf)
- Dias, J and Tome, T (2018): Inverted State and Citizens' Roles in the Mozambican Health Sector. *Institute of Development Studies (IDS) Bulletin* 29 (2).
- Fourchard, L (2008): A New Name for an Old Practice: Vigilantes in South-western Nigeria. *Perspectives on Vigilantism in Nigeria. Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 78 (1): 16-40. Cambridge University Press.
- Goldstein, A and Mansfield, E D (eds) (2012): *The Nexus of Economics, Security, and International Relations in East Asia.* *Stanford Security Studies.* Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Hassan, I (2017, March 20): *The Role of Women in Countering Violent Extremism: The Nigerian Experience with Boko Haram.* Peace Insight. Available from:  
<https://www.peaceinsight.org/blog/2017/03/role-women-countering-violence-extremism-nigerian-experience-boko-haram/>
- Higate, P and Utas, M (eds) (2017): *Private Security in Africa: From the Global Assemblage to the Everyday.* *Africa Now and Nordic Africa Institute.* London: Zed Books.
- Holland, M (1994): *Two Programs Help Cut City Crime.* *Savanna Evening Press.*
- HRW (2002): Nigeria: The Bakassi Boys: The Legitimization of Murder and Torture. *Human Rights Watch Report* 14 (5A).  
<http://www.hrw.org/reports/2002/nigeria0502.pdf>

- (2003): Nigeria: The O’odua People’s Congress: Fighting Violence with Violence. *Human Rights Watch Report* 15 (4A). <https://www.hrw.org/report/2003/02/28/oodua-peoples-congress-opc/fighting-violence-violence>
- (2010, August 17): “Everyone’s in on the Game”: Corruption and Human Rights Abuses by the Nigeria Police Force. *Human Rights Watch. The Big Spin*: 23-25. <https://www.hrw.org/report/2010/08/17/everyones-game/corruption-and-human-rights-abuses-nigeria-police-force>
- (2012, October 11): Spiraling Violence: Boko Haram Attacks and Security Force Abuses in Nigeria. *Human Rights Watch*. <https://www.hrw.org/report/2012/10/11/spirling-violence/boko-haram-attacks-and-security-force-abuses-nigeria>
- (2019, January 17): Nigeria: Heightened Insecurity Threatens Rights. Slow Progress on Justice for Security Force Abuses. *Human Rights Watch*. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/01/17/nigeria-heightened-insecurity-threatens-rights>
- ICG (2018, July 26): Stopping Nigeria’s Spiralling Farmer-Herder Violence. *International Crisis Group Report* 262. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/west-africa/nigeria/262-stopping-nigerias-spiralling-farmer-herder-violence>
- (2020, May 18): Violence in Nigeria’s North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem. *Africa Report* 288. <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/288-violence-in-nigerias-north-west.pdf>
- Kabir, A (2020, February 3): Insecurity: At Least 245 Killed in Violent Attacks in Nigeria in January. *Premium Times Newspapers*.
- Klinenberg, E (2018, August 23): The Other Side of “Broken Windows”. *The New Yorker Newspaper*. <https://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/the-other-side-of-broken-windows>
- Kupoluyi, A (2020, January 22): The Boiling Debate on Operation Amotekun. *Vanguard Newspapers*. <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2020/01/he-boiling-debate-on-operation-amotekun/>
- LaGrange, R L, Ferraro, K F and Supancic, M (1992): Perceived Risk and Fear of Crime: Role of Social and Physical Incivilities. *Journal of Research in Crime & Delinquency* 29: 311-334.
- Leadership (2018, July 10): New Sect, Hakika, Emerges, Recruiting Massively in Adamawa, Nasarawa. *Leadership Newspapers*. <https://leadership.ng/2018/07/10/new-sect-hakika-emerges-recruiting-massively-in-adamawa-nasarawa/>
- Lyons, T (2004): Transforming the Institutions of War: Postconflict Elections and the Reconstruction of Failed States. In R I Rotberg (ed) *When States Fail: Causes and Consequences* pp 269-301. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Maishanu, A A (2018, November 30): Strange ‘Armed Group’ Appears in Sokoto. *Premium Times*. <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/regional/nwest/298320-strange-armed-group-appears-in-sokoto.html>
- Marx, G T and Archer, D (1999): Citizen Involvement in the Law Enforcement: The Case of Community Police Patrols. *American Behavioural Scientist* 15 (1): 52-72.
- Menkhaus, K (2007): Governance without Government in Somalia: Spoilers, State Building, and the Politics of Coping. *International Security* 31 (3): 74–106.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1162/isec.2007.31.3.74>

- Migdal, J S (1988): *Strong Societies and Weak States: State-Society Relations and State Capabilities in the Third World*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Mohanty, S and Mohanty, R K (2014): *Community Policing as a Public Policy: Challenges and Recommendations*. Unabridged edition. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing. <https://www.cambridgescholars.com/download/sample/61713>
- Mohammed, I (2020, January 20): Six Killed, Many Kidnapped as Armed Men in Military Uniform Attack Emir's Convoy. *Premium Times Newspapers*. <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/372855-six-killed-many-kidnapped-as-armed-men-in-military-uniform-attack-emirs-convoy.html>
- Nolte, I (2008): 'Without Women, Nothing can Succeed': Yoruba Women in the Oodua People's Congress (OPC), Nigeria. *Africa: The Journal of the International African Institute* 78 (1): 84-106. Cambridge University Press.
- NRC (2019): *Nigeria: Wealth, Poverty and Rising Violence*. Norwegian Refugee Council. <https://www.nrc.no/perspectives/2019/wealth-poverty-and-rising-violence/>
- Nwuzor, R A (2002): *Educating for Democracy in Nigeria*. Enugu: Future Tech Publishers.
- Nwuzor, C V (2018): Education in Africa. In O Akanle and J Adesina (eds) *The Development of Africa: Issues, Diagnoses and Prognoses. Social Indicators Research Series* 71: 95-114 of 412 pages. Switzerland: Springer International Publishing AG.
- Nyaura, J E and Ngugi, M N (2014): The Benefits and Challenges Emanating from Community Policing in Kenya: A Criminological Perspective. *International Journal of Innovation and Scientific Research* 12 (1): 13-21. <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.685.4961&rep=rep1&type=pdf>
- Obama White House Archives (2013, April 5): Fact Sheet: U.S. Security Sector Assistance Policy. *The White House Office of the Press Secretary*. <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/briefing-room/statements-and-releases>
- Odekunle, F (2005): Overview of Policing in Nigeria: Problems and Suggestions. In E O Alemika and I C Chukwuma (eds) *Crime and Policing in Nigeria: Challenges and Options* pp 22-34. Network on Police Reform in Nigeria (NOPRIN)/CLEEN Foundation.
- Ogbonnaya, U M (2020): Informal Security Sector and Security Provisioning in Nigeria: Trends, Issues and Challenge. In C Varin and F Onuoha (eds) *Security in Nigeria: Contemporary Threats and Responses*. United Kingdom: Bloomsbury Publishing PLC.
- Ogbozor, E (2016): Understanding the Informal Security Sector in Nigeria. *United States Institute of Peace (USIP)*, Special Report No. 391. <https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/SR391-Understanding-the-Informal-Security-Sector-in-Nigeria.pdf>
- Okon-Ekong, N, Enumah, A and Sowole, J (2020, January 16): South-west Govs Resist FG, Say No Going Back on Amotekun. *ThisDay Newspapers*. <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2020/01/16/south-west-govs-resist-fg-say-no-going-back-on-amotekun/>
- Olaniyi, R (2003): *Crime Control, Police and Vigilante Groups: Community Action for*

- Security in Sabongari, Kano, 1953-2001*. Research Report submitted to the French Institute for Research in Africa, Nigeria | *Institut français de recherche en Afrique, Nigeria* (IFRA) Ibadan Newsletter XI (2).
- Onyeozili, E C (2005): Obstacles to Effective Policing in Nigeria. *African Journal of Criminology and Justice Studies* 1 (1): 32-54 (April).
- Oriola, T (2016): "I Acted Like a Man": Exploring Female Ex-Insurgents' Narratives about Nigeria's Oil Insurgency. *Review of African Political Economy* 43 (149): 451-469. Routledge Taylor and Francis Group.
- OSAC (2020): Nigeria 2020 Crime & Safety Report: Lagos. U.S. Department of State Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC) *Crime and Safety Report*. <https://www.osac.gov/Content/Report/b4c7348c-8cd8-4e1b-bf01-188e5b7ee9b9>
- Osumah, O (2013): Boko Haram Insurgency in Northern Nigeria and the Vicious Cycle of Internal Insecurity. *Journal of Small Wars and Insurgencies* 24 (3). Online: Taylor and Francis <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09592318.2013.802605>
- Peeler, T (2019): Vigilante Liability. *Legal Match*. <https://www.legalmatch.com/law-library/article/vigilante-liability.html>
- Punch Newspapers (2019, August 30): Despite Peace, Fears Persist over Zamfara Amnesty. *Punch Newspapers*. <https://punchng.com/despite-peace-fears-persist-over-zamfara-amnesty/>
- Rosenbaum, H J and Sederberg, P C (1974): Vigilantism: An Analysis of Establishment Violence. *Comparative Politics* 6 (4): 541-570.
- Rotberg, R I (2004): The Failure and Collapse of Nation-States: Breakdown, Prevention, and Repair. In R I Rotberg (ed) *When States Fail: Causes and Consequences* pp 1-50. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Sahara Reporters (2018, December 1): New Terror Group Takes Over Sokoto Community, Imposes Levies on Residents. Sahara Reporters. <http://saharareporters.com/2018/12/01/new-terror-group-takes-over-sokoto-community-imposes-levies-residents>
- Segrave, M and Ratcliffe, J (2004): Community Policing: A Descriptive Overview. Australian Government. *Australian Institute of Criminology*.
- SIPRI (2019, November 12): The State Preferred as Justice and Security Provider over Non-state and Informal Actors. New SIPRI/Cordaid Study on CAR and DRC. *Stockholm International Peace and Research Institute*. <https://www.sipri.org/media/press-release/2019/state-preferred-justice-and-security-provider-over-non-state-and-informal-actors-new-sipricordaid>
- Skogan, W G (2019): Advocate: Community Policing. In D Weisburd and A Braga (eds) *Police Innovation: Contrasting Perspectives* 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Cambridge Studies in Criminology 25-44. Cambridge University Press. <http://www.ncjrs.gov/policing/use139.htm>
- Skolnick, J H and Bayley, D (1988): *Community Policing: Issues and Practices around the World*. U.S. Institute of Justice, National Institute of Justice, Office of Communication and Research Utilization.
- Trojanowicz, R and Bucqueroux, B (1990): *Community Policing: A Contemporary Perspective*. Ohio: Anderson Publishing Co.
- UN (2019, August 1): Ten Years on, Crisis in Nigeria 'Far from Over'; UN and Humanitarian Partners Urge Support for



Millions Still Affected. United Nations  
*Global Perspective Human Stories*.  
<https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/08/1043581>

UNICEF (2017, September 15): Civilian Joint Task Force in Northeast Nigeria Signs Action Plan to End Recruitment of Children. *UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict and UNICEF welcome milestone agreement*. <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/civilian-joint-task-force-northeast-nigeria-signs-action-plan-end-recruitment>.

Weber, M (1946): *Essays in Sociology*. Translated, edited and with an Introduction by H H Gerth and C W Mills. New York: Oxford University Press.

Wycoff, M A (1988): The Benefits of Community Policing: Evidence and Conjecture. In J Green and S D Mastrofski (eds) *Community Policing: Rhetoric or Reality* 103-134. New York: Praeger Publishers.

Wylar, L S (2008): *Weak and Failing States: Evolving Security Threats and U.S. Policy*. CRS Report for Congress. Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service.

Zartman, W I (ed) (1995): *Collapsed States: The Disintegration and Restoration of Legitimate Authority*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

## About the Author

**Ndubuisi N Nwokolo** is a Partner and the Chief Executive at NextierSPD (Nigeria) as well as a Post-doctoral Fellow (non-residential) at the School of Government and Society, University of Birmingham, UK. He holds a PhD from the University of Birmingham in the political economy of oil conflicts, and an advanced MA in conflict and sustainable peace studies from the University of Leuven. His research and policy interests centre on issues of natural resources conflict and governance, security, peacebuilding and sustainable development in fragile and developing states, especially African states.

## Imprint

Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung | Analysis Series  
12 Marrakesh Street | Wuse II, Abuja |  
Nigeria

## Responsible:

**Dr Daniel Mann** | Resident Representative

Phone: +234-803-899-8708

[www.fes-nigeria.org](http://www.fes-nigeria.org)

Commercial use of all the media published by Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung is not permitted without the written consent of FES.

The views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, the Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre and the European Union.

ISBN 978-978-8449-63-8

