

# **THE ROLE OF THE SECURITY SECTOR IN PROMOTING DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA**

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The security sector is key to sustenance of emerging democracies of the third world countries. However, the readiness and the ability of the security sector to play these roles that assure citizens of the benefit of good governance remains a question begging for deep reflections. The quality of the Security agencies in a democracy is measured by its ability to protect life and property as well as maintenance of public order. There is no doubt therefore, that a failed security sector remains a threat to democracy and good governance. This paper therefore, examines the extant role that the security sector in Nigeria has played in the sustenance of positive democratic governance, particularly since the beginning of the current democratic experience in 1999.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The need for Nigeria to address issues bordering on security and its ability to continue to exist as a united entity has in recent times become more expedient than it had ever being since independence. Greater responsibilities are being placed on the security sector to put in place programs that will promote the cementing of social order, in order not to threaten the corporate existence of the Nigerian state.

There is no gainsaying the fact that Nigeria now occupies a prominent place in the list the world most troubled states. Various forms of violent conflicts involving ethnic groupings, religious divides, armed robbery kidnappings, abductions, extra judicial killings have been reported both in local and international media with severe consequence on the international reputation of Nigeria and Nigerians. Recent reports have it that more than 12000 Nigerians have been killed by Boko Haram alone. Safety of young ones which is the responsibility of the state has been put to question by the recent abduction of over 200 young girls, students of Chibok Secondary School in north East region of the country. All these incidences have been linked to failure of state and indeed democratic governance in Nigeria.

In the light of the above, certain questions have to be addressed by scholars in order to be able to proffer appropriate policy supported solutions to these problems. These are,

- **What are the major challenges to democratic governance in Nigeria from 1999 to date?**
- **How has the security sector responded to the challenges of sustenance of democratic governance in Nigeria?**
- **What are the peculiar circumstances or situations of the security sector in the democratic governance in Nigeria?**
- **How have the citizens in the various grouping responded to issues of insecurity in Nigeria.**

- **What form of security sector reform will be beneficial to stable democratic governance in Nigeria?**

The answers to these posers will be summarized in this paper but given in details in the subsequent presentation. However, in other properly organize our thoughts, it is important to put the concept of security in perspective.

### **CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

Contemporary discourse on the concept of security, has brought to the fore, the need to take issues of nonoffensive defence, economic security bothering on livelihood issues, environmental security, drug threats and human rights issues. Security is broadly conceived as encompassing issues having to do with freedom from danger or threats to a nation's ability to protect and defend itself, promote its cherished values and legitimate interest and enhance the well-being of its people (Imobighe, 1990; Mijah, 2007).

In order to understand the concept of security properly, it may be advantageous to draw from literature in peace studies. Modern concept of security in peace research literature provides a serious link between security and development. Security does not exclusively connote military might, although it may include it. In modernizing society, security means development. Security is not traditional military activities though it may encompass it, it is not military hardware though it may include it. Security is development and without development, there can be no security. This is a non-conventional conception of security with emphasis on human security. It implies the maturation of the structures and processes that can endanger and guarantee political space and sufficient conditions for

the realization of among other things, personal, group, national e.t.c aspirations (Mijah, 2007).

In the same vein, Kofi Annan (1998) presented the human perspective of security. He noted that security means far more than absence of conflict. He added that lasting peace requires a broader vision encompassing areas such as education, health, democracy, and human rights, protection against environmental degradation and the proliferation of deadly weapons. There is no security amidst starvation, peace building without poverty alleviation and no true freedom built on the foundation of injustice. These pillars that form the concept of human security are inter-related and mutually reinforcing.

## **THE CHALLENGES OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA**

In this roundtable event, security will be discussed in the perspective of federalism with particular focus on Democratic governance. By UNDP definition, democratic governance is conceived as the capacity of a society to define and establish policies and resolve their conflicts peacefully within the existing legal order. This is said to be a necessary condition for the rule of law along with the separation of powers and a legal system that ensures the enjoyment of individual freedom and rights-civil, social, political and cultural. This requires institutions based on the principles of equity, freedom, participation in decision making, accountability and promoting the inclusion of the most vulnerable sectors of the society. One of the most important state structure that nourish democratic governance is the Security sector. The major challenges to democratic governance in Nigeria include how to structure the Nigerian federation to accommodate the various ethnic groups and guarantee equal access to power as well as enhance equitable distribution of national resources (Osaghae, 1995). This has been summarized by Adejumobi (2003) to include;

- what should be the component units and tiers of government in the Nigerian federation?
- how should they be constituted, based on ethnic contiguity or administrative expediency?
- How should political power and responsibilities be shared among the levels and tiers of government?
- How should the ownership of economic resources be structured in the Nigerian federation?
- What should be the acceptable formulae for sharing federally collected revenue?

- What should be the nature of inter-governmental relations in Nigeria?

Jimoh (2006) added two other issues, viz

- What role should religion play in state affairs?
- What level of inequality and/or poverty is acceptable within the Nigerian state?

These issues have manifested in different dimensions to the extent that democratic governance is threatened. In Nigeria, although constitutional provisions are made to cater for issues, their implementations have created more challenges than solutions.

## **CHALLENGES TO SECURITY SECTOR IN NIGERIA DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE**

The security sector like others has had several challenges during the fourth democratic republic in Nigeria (1999 to date). Each of these challenges in one way or the other limits the efficiency and effectiveness of the sectors in living up to its mandates. Some of the challenges identified by Mijah, (2007) are note-worthy.

- The security sector as an institution in Nigeria has suffered citizens confidence problems to the point of creating an upsurge in proliferation of private security organizations,
- Insecurity in Nigeria has reached a point that it now gains a prominent place in the campaign agenda of political parties in Nigeria. The level of our infrastructural development leaves much to be desired>
- The deficit democratic governance in Nigeria results in the failure to institute sufficient policies and programmes to alter the structure of imbalance and inequity entrenched by colonialism and prolonged authoritarian military rule
- As a result of the multi-ethnic character and the failure of the nationalist project to evolve a true nation and a corresponding identity, ethnic, religious and other primordial point by reference assumed added importance.

- v. The control and imminent abuse of security agents by different governments in Nigeria has increased the agitation by many for modification of controls of security agencies.
- vi. Corruption and brazen constitutional breaches by the security sectors in several national issues has exposed the lack of independence of the security sector.
- vii. The capacity failure of democratic governance and the growing insecurity it endangers, elicited violent forms of reactions that threatens internal security and the consolidation of democracy in Nigeria. No time in the history of Nigeria have we lost people to violent conflict as we now experience on daily basis.
- viii. The naked desperation for political office and by extension for unrestricted access to state resources by political office holders and their patrons have heightened the state of insecurity in the country. As 2015 general elections are drawing near, and the contestation for political space increases, kidnappings and killing of prominent political figures now occupy the pages of our newspapers. These issues notwithstanding, security agents are still unable to unravel most of these criminal activities.

## **THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF SECURITY SECTOR TO DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA**

In spite of all these challenges, the security sector has played prominent roles in the sustenance of the democratic culture in Nigeria. The main objective of this our effort is how stakeholders can synergize to make security sector more effective and responsive.

Their contributions according to Fayeye (2010) have been most prominent in the following areas:

- i. The use of Joint security Task Forces (JTF) to manage locations, areas, zones, or states with large scale breakdown of law and order in Kaduna, Kano, Jos, Benue,

Niger-Delta areas among others have being managed through the joint efforts of combined team in the security family.

- ii. Protection of public institution buildings and installations including pipelines, oil exploration in prospecting zones, cables, flow lines among others. Vandals with economic, political, psycho-social, reprisal motives have been kept in check and managed.
- iii. Protection of border posts and national waters that are strategic to the security of the Nigerian state are managed and put under appropriate surveillance scheme.
- iv. Routine maintenance of law and order via patrol, beat management, force deployment and sporadic or rapid response to distress calls.
- v. Active surveillance on foods, drugs and control of standard practice in chemical consumption and utilization through pharmaco-vigilance and drug law implementation.
- vi. Investigating, detecting and managing financial transactions in respect of public funds administration and corruption prosecution. The role of Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and Independent Corrupt Practices and Allied Matter Commission (ICPC) are noteworthy in this respect.
- vii. Participation in regional and international defence through peace-keeping/support operations. In this respect, the Nigerian security sector has fared relatively well.
- viii. Cooperating with other international security bodies in managing, controlling international crimes, cyber crimes and related trends. The Nigerian security sector executed surveillance to identify Nigeria as either a country of origin, transit or destination for drugs, human trafficking as well as money laundering.
- ix. Management of disarmament process of the militant in the Niger-Delta zone via the national amnesty programme. The tactical and civil approach to willing militants who surrendered arms and light weapons recorded no known casualty or invidious civil-military operational relations.



- x. The networking of security to eliminate ethnic conflicts, local insurrections, criminal syndicate, kidnapping, environmental pollution and oil piracy and equally noteworthy.
- xi. Enforcing curfews, and details of declared state of emergency in Plateau and Ekiti states and mopping up incidences of political thuggery in the body politic of the Nigerian state.
- xii. The discipline exhibited by the military in particular and other members of the security family in keeping to their constitutional roles of non-interference in political government enhanced for the first time enhanced for the first time in Nigeria a civilian-civilian democratic transition in 1999. This promoted the image of Nigeria as one of the most populous and consistent democracy in Africa and the black world. The security sector has thus played its crucial role in supporting enduring democratic governance in Nigeria.

#### **SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMS FOR THE SECURITY SECTOR**

- Building and strengthening the professional capacity of the security forces through skill development and technical modernization.
- Strengthening the capacity of the civil authorities in the executive and legislative arms of government to develop security policy and manage the sector.
- Tackling the problems of small arms proliferation
- Building the capacity of civil society to monitor security sector policies.
- Enhancing respect for human rights throughout the security sector
- Promoting national and regional confidence building mechanisms.
- Setting in motion the process of determining and controlling security sector expenditure. This should address the problem of corruption.
- The process of democratic and legislative policies should be more transparent, efficient and effective.

- Establishing programme for the support of weapons collection activities in all communities through the award of small-scale development project.
- Training the judiciary to address speedily domestic violence.
- Enhancing female and minority participation in the security sector through a balanced quota system.

## **CONCLUSION**

The security sector as a critical sector in the promotion of democratic governance and hence better life for the citizens deserves all attentions that we can give them. This is why the current effort by KAS should be applauded.