

IMPROPER STRUCTURE OF THE NIGERIAN POLICE AND THE QUEST FOR STATE POLICE: LESSONS FROM VIGILANTE SERVICES

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Abstract

The quest for the establishment of state police in Nigeria has ascended from pedestrian to national discourse and has no doubt generated a lot of controversy as to the role assigned to the Nigerian police formation by the constitution and the way and manner they have been performing these roles. Consequent upon this, the increasing spate of violence that has been unleashed on the citizens of this nation and the resultant deaths has heightened the clamour for state police in Nigeria. This is as a result of the failure of the centrally controlled police formation in Nigeria to provide the needed security to Nigerians, leaving them at the mercy of criminal elements in the society. It is against this background that almost all the states of the federation established their own security outfits to protect their citizens from incessant attacks. It is on this premise that this paper discusses the reasons why there has been continued call for the establishment of state police in Nigeria. The paper also recommends ways to restructure the Nigerian police for better service delivery.

Keywords: Governance, policing, state police, vigilante services.

Introduction

From the period the first human beings were created, the human population has gradually spread across the globe, and it is indeed no doubt fraught with conflicts. The need to curtail the ugly consequences of conflict gave rise to formation of the state whereby individuals surrendered some of their natural rights to a recognized government which, among other salient functions, makes rules and regulations guiding human actions and inactions at a giving place and time.

In his explanation of the theory of social contract Chikendu (2002), quoted Thomas Hobbes as saying that man is naturally selfish, cruel and cunning and also derives no pleasure in the happiness of others. Accordingly, man's urge for self-preservation at all cost has reduced life to a state of violent death, adding that all are enemies of all. This he summed up in his celebrated phrase, that life became "solitary, poor, brutish, nasty and short". Consequently, driven by the sheer necessity and urgency of self-preservation, a contract was made among men and this gave birth to the state. Once the state was formed, a government was established, a constituted authority charged with the duty of maintaining peace and order and the protection of lives and properties of the people.

Writing further, Chikendu (p. 112) posited that among the social contract theorists, it was Jean Jacques Rousseau that captured the introduction of crime in organized society. He argued that Rousseau's social contract theory departed markedly from Hobbes and Locke in his conception of the state of nature. Rousseau's state of nature was one of idyllic peace and happiness. Accordingly, man is social and sympathetic and enjoys complete freedom, simplicity and equality, (Rousseau, 1972). But these freedoms did not persist for long because of three things - increase in population, origin of private property and the growth of reason. As a result, differences were made between the rich and poor, the haves and have not's and oppression of man by man became common. The implication of Rousseau's postulations was that the appetite of man and unending quest for riches accounts for the introduction of crime in the society, hence the need for government which, will with all its force, maintains the security of life and property of its citizens without infringing on individual freedom and liberty. A contract was then made by all with each and each with all and state was born, among other things, to enforce this contract.

The state is seen as a politically independent, territorially defined group of people, possessing a government that is subordinate to none other and monopolizes all the coercive instruments of compulsion at its disposal in the enforcement of its decisions. (Okoli, 1990). In other words, state is the ultimate stage in the evolution of the community. The government of a state formulates laws, rules and regulations to guide human actions and inactions within a given socio political arrangement. The police which is one of the coercive instruments of compulsion the state uses to enforce its decisions is vested with the onerous responsibility of maintaining law and order, and combating crime to guarantee the security of life and property, ensures national security and by extension ensures socio political development of a nation.

The police in Nigeria have a very bad image and reputation as an instrument of crime control. The police are generally believed to have not done much in controlling crime and criminality effectively. Crime is on the increase in Nigeria and the police are generally believed to be corrupt, a failure that the public attribute to the problem of inefficiency in the organization. Police corruption impacts directly on their ability to prevent crime including criminal investigation (Dambazu 2007). Many observers attest to the fact that there is wide spread corruption in the Nigeria police and that this is the image the general public has of the average Nigerian policeman. This, according to Obasanjo (2014), is so bad that there is no difference between some police officers and armed robbers as some policemen hire out guns to some of these armed robbers for their operations. In the same vein, Ifedigbo (2014) posited that there is a great defect in the structural arrangement of the Nigeria police as an institution and that it has impacted negatively on their ability to effect and ensure National security.

On Issues of National Security, Law and Order

Among the issues of national security are law and order, the aggregate of the security interest of all individuals, communities, political entities and institutions that inhabit a given political environment (Mohammed 2016). Hence he maintained that National security is about safeguarding the interest of the citizenry and providing the type of

atmosphere that is free of threats from deviant behaviours that could inhibit the pursuance of the good of all. It is about the processes and measures required to preserve law and order; this is where the duty of the police lies. Following this trajectory, Galtung (1998) avers that the police approach to security is justified on the basis that only a well-positioned and strong police force can deter attacks on internal security and threats or attack on peace and order as well as providing means of fighting undeterred attacks.

However, in the case of Nigeria, the vast size of her police formation has not resulted in corresponding increase in the maintenance of the traditional function of the police which Heywood (1997; p.360) defined as the maintenance of security, order, peace and the protection of life and property of the citizens of a state and the provision of humanitarian services. But contrary to popular and reasonable expectations, the police in Nigeria has been used for negative purposes including the oppression, terrorization and repression of citizens. Hence rather than the police being the solution to the security problems of the country, it has compounded and perpetuated them (Heywood 1997). On his part, Luckham (1998) avers that the police in Nigeria as in many other African countries have not been able to maintain domestic security, defend the National interest or uphold the protection of lives and properties of citizens. According to him, it seems that one of the major reasons why the police in Nigeria have failed to effectively maintain National security is because of the centralized structure of the Nigeria police which makes it to mainly cater to the personal security of those in the position of authority thereby plunging them in deep corruption. In line with the foregoing, most of the state governors introduced far reaching measures to ensure the security of lives and property of their citizens. In Anambra state, we have Anambra vigilante service. In Lagos state they have Lagos state neighbourhood watch. In Rivers state, Enugu state, Delta, Imo, Ebonyi state, there are similar Neighbourhood watches. Indeed, in virtually all the states of the federation there is one form of internal or state owned security arrangement to ensure the security of lives and property of the people of their various states. It is within the context of such vigilante and neighbourhood watch services existing side by side with the police to combat crime that this study is situated.

No doubt, on security issues, we note that the fundamental objective of all governments is underpinned by the need to protect lives and property of citizens. It is in recognition of this that the Nigeria government pursuant to section 214 of the 1999 constitution established the Nigerian police as an institution charged with the duty of internal security which among other functions involve the protection of lives and property of her citizens, maintenance of law and order and ensuring peaceful coexistence of her citizens.

It becomes worrisome when this important agency of government is always found wanting in the performance of its functions. The incidence of May 2018 is still fresh in the minds of Nigerian, when five banks were robbed in Offa Kwara state that saw the death of 33 civilians and 9 policemen (Felix 2018). There is increasing killings by killer herdsmen throughout the federation. Thousands of Nigerians have lost their lives in farmers-herders clashes unprecedented in the history of Nigeria as a democratic nation (Ifedigbo 2014) and it is worrisome that the state governors who are supposed to be the chief security officers

of their respective states cannot influence police operations in their respective states even when they have credible intelligence of impending attacks on their states. Enugu state, Taraba state, Nassarawa state, Plateau state, Zamfara state, Kaduna state and others are cases in point where villages were over run, scores of people killed, homes and property worth billions of Naira destroyed with prior intelligence indicating that the attacks were imminent and the police could not do anything to avert the situation. There is Boko Haram menace in the Northeast that has presented a very bad image of Nigeria in the international community. There is kidnapping as we never experienced before. Armed robbery and ritual killings are on the increase. There has been deployment and redeployment of officers and men of the Nigerian police to see if this trend could be curtailed but to no avail.

The implication of the foregoing is that Nigerians are living in conditions reminiscent of the Hobbesian state of nature where there is constant fear of violent and sudden deaths and it appears that the government is at a loss about what to do. This has led to the introduction of neighbourhood watches that later became known as vigilante services - a local security mechanism to help with the security of lives and property of citizens throughout the 36 states of the federation as the police seems to have failed the people in that regard (Nwankwo 2015).

On the Nigerian Police, we note that the Nigerian police force was established in 1861. The British consul, John Beecroft who was in charge at the time complained about enormous security responsibilities assigned to them including maintenance of law and order with limited personnel. Consequent upon this, he sought permission from his home government Great Britain through his principal in London to establish consular guards in 1861 comprising of thirty men. The number rose to one hundred and thirteen in 1863, subsequently in 1863, the substantive governor of Lagos, H.S Freeman was granted permission to raise the men to 600 and permit them to bear arms.

These men consisted of mainly Hausas which led to the change of their name from consular guards to Hausa constabulary in 1879 following the merger of the armed Hausa police and the civil police. The south east including the middle belt area which was declared the oil River protectorate with headquarters in Calabar under the headship of the British consul for Calabar Mr. Hewitt who having sought permission from his home government, though the request was not granted, was able to raise a small police force and armed them for the protection of lives and properties in the region at the time. The force was later disbanded as a result of malfeasance and numerous complains on the part of the consul when McDonald succeeded him as British consul. When the oil River protectorate was renamed as the Niger coast protectorate, Niger coast constabulary was established in 1894. Meanwhile in the Northern part which was given charter by British Government in 1886 had established the Royal Niger constabulary in 1888 for ease of government and maintenance of law and order in that region.

After the administrative take over by the British in 1900 from the Niger Royal company, the colony of Lagos and Southern protectorates was proclaimed which saw majority of the men of the Niger coast constabulary joining the Southern regiment. The remaining members of the constabulary and Lagos regiments were collapsed into Southern police force in 1906, which was commanded by an Inspector general of police

who was also in charge of prisons. After the amalgamation of Northern and Southern protectorate in 1914, each of the forces continued to exist and operate separately until 1 April 1930 when they were merged to form the Nigerian Police force, commanded by the Inspector General of Police. The original title was reverted in 1951 after the introduction of new constitution. The designation "Commissioner" was assigned to officer-in-charge of the regions.

The creation of 12 states in 1967 led to each state establishing police command headquarters with each headed by a commissioner of Police. Nigeria assumed overall leadership of the force back in 1964 when the late Louis Edet was appointed the first indigenous Inspector General of Nigerian Police force. Today the number of states has risen to 36 with federal capital territory, each having a command headquarter headed by a commissioner of Police followed by the establishment of zonal headquarters headed by an Assistant Inspector General of Police to conform to the political structure of the country.

The structure of Nigerian police is provided for in section 214 and 215 of 1999 constitution. Accordingly, section 214 sub section 2 (a) states that the Nigerian police shall be organized and administered in accordance with such provision as may be prescribed by the Act of the National Assembly. Section 215 sub section 2 states that the Nigerian police shall be under the command of the inspector general of police and that the Nigerian police contingent stationed in a state shall be under the authority and command of commissioner of police posted to the state.

On the Command (Authority) Structure of Nigerian Police we note that the command structure which is also referred to as authority structure of the Nigerian police is predicated on the regimental nature of the force and conducted along the force badges of the police; this is in accordance with section 295 sub sections 2 of 1999 constitution as amended. Specifically, section 6 of Nigerian Police Act of 1990 provides that the force shall be commanded by the Inspector General of police which means that orders, directives and instructions to perform or carry out the duties of the formation as required of them by the constitution flows from the inspector general through the chain of command to any officer positioned to implement such order. In carrying out these functions, disobedience or failure to carry out such instructions, directives or orders attracts punishment or sanction. According to section 7 sub section 1 of the police act, the next in line to the Inspector General is the Deputy Inspector General of Police. Although this rank was not specifically mentioned in the constitution, it is backed by law because the laws establishing the police formation is an act of the National Assembly. According to section 7, of the police act, the deputy shall act in the absence of the IG. Section 5 of the same act makes room for as many deputies as the police council considered appropriate, but in the case of succession, the most senior of the DIGs will be elevated to the position of the IG. Every other rank below the inspector general of police takes orders from him. Section 5 of the Police Act (1999) in accordance with the provisions of section 215 of 1999 constitution provides for the office of commissioners of police in all the states of the federation with the contingent of the policemen in each state under the command of the commissioner. However, he is subject to the command of the Inspector General of Police or whosoever acts for him in his absence. Every other rank of the police formation is provided for by the Police Act. Finally, the

constitution confers the power of appointment of Inspector General of police under section 215 (a) on the president with the advice of the police service commission

The Clamour for the Establishment of State Police in Nigeria

According to Hutchful (1998), the centrally structured policing system in Nigeria has failed to achieve operational efficiency, institutional solidarity and stability which have resulted in their inability to uphold the principle of justice, respect for human life and compassion towards other human beings in the society. Ezekaannaya (2012) also opined that the politicization of the Nigerian police force has proven to be a major cog in the wheel of effective and efficient policing in Nigeria. According to him, the force has been influenced by the prevailing character of politics in Nigeria, making it deviate from its constitutional role of protecting lives and properties in the country to a mere tool for achieving the political interest of the government in power. Hence the need for decentralization.

Moreover, the overbearing attitude of high-ranking officers in the Nigerian police resulting from the centralized authority structure also account for the continued call for the establishment of state police (Nwanneka 2014). According to her, the Nigerian police is an instrument of oppression and repression in the hand of the central government. Arguing further she cited an example where the Nigerian police was used to perpetuate a civilian coup in Anambra state when the former Governor Dr Chris Ngige was kidnapped because he was in the bad book of the central government which wanted him out at all cost.

The notion of state police is an advocacy for the extension of federal principles in police structure and operation in Nigeria, otherwise called police federalism, (Biereenu-Nnabugwu). In recent years, arguments for and against the practice of federal policing and police federalism has gained increasing prominence in the public space. Those advocating for centralized policing hinge their argument not only on today's Nigeria being beset by fear and self-interest but also corruption, insecurity and divisive tendencies of politicians. They argue that our country is not yet ripe for state policing arrangement in the face of all these adversaries and also that the present constitutional arrangement does not give room for the establishment of state police. Among those canvassing for continued practice of centralized policing is the police hierarchy and federal officials as well as the northern governor's forum and other Nigerians who fear political expediency and possible abuse by governors. Their fear is largely based on account of previous abuses of regional police in Nigerian pre military era.

Writing on the need for the continued practice of centralized policing in Nigeria, Oluoma (2013) posited that creation of state police is an invitation to secession and disintegration of the country. Accordingly, she posited that the establishment of state police would take Nigeria back to the days of Ethnic militia where the likes of OPC, MASSOB, Egbesu, and Arewa Progressive Movement would have a field day. Arguing further, she maintained that there are crimes such as terrorism that are beyond the capacity of state policing apparatus to handle. According to her only centrally controlled police can handle such crimes, and the danger Nigeria's democracy does not lie with a centrally controlled police that is too strong but localized police that is too weak (Oluoma 2013).

Arguing further, she stated that crimes are no longer local affairs but are becoming national and transnational affairs and state police that is too weak cannot handle them. The third reason according to her is Nigeria's experience in the past where local government police and native authority police were used to undermine or damage the democratic process. State police force in the past were used and manipulated by dishonest politicians to intimidate, prosecute and suppress perceived political opponents and enemies. On the issue of funding, she posited that policing is too costly an enterprise to be left in the hands of the state government. According to her, the cost associated with the maintenance of 36 state police formations including the F.C.T where each unit will be grappling with the same issues of recruitment, training, equipping and financing would amount to economic waste. Contributing on the issue of maintaining the status-quo with regard to the structure of Nigeria police as presently constituted, Adedoyin (2014) stated that the state policing system will compound the problem of the country because the present crop of politicians will use it to fight political opponents and it could also be used to promote communal crises, especially by the state governors.

On the other side of the divide are those who support the establishment of state police. They hinge their argument on functionality. Accordingly, they posit that Nigeria would be better off security wise particularly with the increasing activities of the Boko Haram insurgents, the wanton killings by the killer Herdsmen, kidnappings and other forms of criminality if state police formations are established and properly positioned to operate alongside the federal police just as the state and federal judiciaries exist side by side. Biereenu-Nnabugwu (2011) advocated for the establishment of police federalism basing his argument on recent security challenges, since 2010, in different parts of the country which has helped to bring to the front burner the issue of police federalism in Nigeria. Writing on the need for state police, Dame (2012) posited that the establishment of state policing system would reduce crime. She argued that policing all over the world is essentially a local service and most crimes originate from the locality. According to her crime detection needs local knowledge that state police can better provide. Arguing further, she stated that the non-decentralization of the police force in Nigeria is a major setback in the security sector because the police lacks autonomy since its recruitment, remuneration, dismissal and overall actions are being controlled by the federal government.

One major factor that has increasingly exacerbated the demand for the establishment of state police in Nigeria is what Heywood (1978) called the politicization of the force. Accordingly, he posited that contrary to popular opinion and reasonable expectation, the police in Nigeria has been used largely for negative purposes including the oppression, terrorization and repression of citizens. Another important factor is what Obianagha (2011) called strained relationship between Nigerian police and the public. According to him, police - citizen relationship in Nigeria is characterized by prejudice and the public tends to resist the police while the police try to assert their superiority and authority on the citizens. These are two important factors in police - citizen relationship. Unless the police begin to see themselves as part of the social fabric of the society, they will be continually seen as alien force. It is only a very few members of the public that see the

police as friends, instead the sight of police is considered synonymous with trouble. False arrest and illegal detention is another factor that has increased the quest for the establishment of state police in Nigeria

According to Ezelesiaku (2013), brutality and human right abuses have been institutionalized by the Nigerian police as investigation technique, thereby escalating the already strained relationship between the public and the police. The law specifies the basis through which the police can arrest, detain or prosecute a suspect or somebody deemed to have committed an offence or offended the law, that the person must be reasonably informed on why he or she is being arrested and must not be detained for more than 24 hours without being charged to a court of competent jurisdiction. Unfortunately, that is not the case in Nigeria. The Nigerian police arrests before investigating, they can even detain a suspect indefinitely for an offence one knows nothing about. The experience of Nigerians who have fallen victim of police abuses shows gross neglect of law and abuse of fundamental rights of individuals.

Another important factor which has also exacerbated the quest for the establishment of state police in Nigeria is what Dambazu (2007) called constitutional limitations to the practice of True federalism in Nigeria. According to him, the establishment, management and the administration of a single police force for the whole country has brought serious challenges to the policing system and federalism credentials of the Nigerian constitution. In providing for a single police system in Nigeria which according to ideal federal principles ought to be coordinated and insulated from the control of the federal government, the constitution has unwittingly tilted the scale in favour of the federal government against the state governments. This imbalance in the constitution coupled with the misconception by the police themselves that they are agents of the federal governments have no doubt affected the impartiality and neutrality of the police and have rekindled recent call for the review of the single policing system for the whole country as a way of improving the efficiency of the force.

Reality and Operations of Vigilantism in Nigeria

Vigilante services and other self-defense groups operating in Nigeria have roots that reach deep into the country's history, dating back to the pre-colonial era. Some independent local communities especially in the south maintained their own standing armies to defend their territory against the threat of invasion from neighboring communities. Although there was no equivalent of a modern day state structure at that time, some parallels could be drawn between these groups which were created by the communities for their own protection and more recent groups. Local conflicts were also fought between members of warrior cults, a clear link could be traced between these warrior cults and the contemporary vigilante groups as we have now (Nzeribe 2012).

Even though these local armies and warrior groups were suspended by the colonial state which claimed monopoly of the use of force, they continued operating across large part of Nigeria. Since Nigerian independence, some of the formal political structures established under colonial rule have disintegrated and Nigerians have adapted historical precedents to the new environment created by large scale urbanization and break down of stable social structures. Local communities across Nigeria as in other African countries

have created their own informal or sometimes formal security structures to try to secure the population; these groups are usually composed of individuals from the local communities who derive their credibility and authority from the community they serve. According to Nzeribe (2012), the main purpose of these initiatives was to complement the police in identifying and handing over criminals and suspects to the appropriate authorities, they sometimes also try to settle conflicts or disputes.

Village or community guards have existed in Igbo communities in the south east for many years which could be likened to more recently formed vigilante groups. Since at least the late 1980s, local forms of vigilante groups have been common in south eastern Nigeria. Most villages have some form of watch or protection either through organized system of watch guards or through more informal networks to monitor the local situation. Throughout the mid-1990s, the state authorities, the traditional rulers and the police called upon the villages to set up vigilante patrols. These often involved contests for rights and privileges and negotiations between young men and their elders as well as the formal judicial bodies. According to Nzeribe (2013), in more recent years, mounting frustration with the steady increase in violent crimes in Nigeria, exacerbated by the inefficiency and widespread corruption of the Nigerian police has led to the formation of different types of vigilante groups exemplified by the then disbanded Bakassi boys. These groups while not entirely removed from the longstanding traditions of vigilante groups in the region, differ from other forms of citizens' involvement in policing in that they are not usually composed of members of the host communities and they tend to be based largely in the cities or large urban areas rather than the villages.

When these groups were first set up, they promised to deal with criminals ruthlessly and definitively with time, they started to deviate from that purpose and became emasculated in inefficiency. A combination of political, economic and social factors including high rate of unemployment and diminished confidence and trust in the state institutions made it easy to recruit people into these groups and for them to flourish without proper and necessary checks (Nzeribe 2012). The situation has been aggravated by influential political figures including the governors who rely on them as political thugs for election purposes.

The term vigilantism is used in Nigeria to refer to a range of different groups each with different motives; the term has been applied to groups such as the Bakassi, OPC, Arewa and Amotekun. In many northern states there are groups also referred to as vigilantes which are used to monitor and enforce observance of Islamic laws. A variety of other armed private security guards abound in Nigeria many of which are formed along ethnic lines for the purpose of maintaining security and to fight and control crime.

The continued clamour for decentralized policing in Nigeria and the establishment of vigilante groups has sometimes been explained as a function of politicization of the police which is then being used for political gains by subsequent governments (Richard 1999). Scholars who project this view anchor their arguments on the fact that the Nigerian state was a product of coercion arising from many years of colonialism and military rule and this character of violence has stuck with the state because subsequent rulers in the country have always sought to maintain control and hegemony through violence, in a 'do or die'

brand of politics. This then is the foundation of electoral violence in Nigeria of which the police are always a handy tool for the actualization of this objective (Adeoye 2005).

Some scholars however explain it as a consequence of the frustration felt by people in the commercially active states of the federation as a result of decline in business activities owing to the activities of criminal elements. This is fuelled by the escalation of criminal activities in these states, and the inability of the central controlled police to save the situation (Dambazu 2007, Jega 2003). These conditions then spurred demands for devolution of the powers of the police and quest for more autonomy to the regions to allow them to establish their own policing outfits (Biereenu-Nnabugwu 2011).

Vigilantism as State Police? The correlation here is that people who believe that local policing system has potentials of improving their wellbeing are amenable to state policing system where personnel would be drawn from the environments with history of crime and the environment is well known to them, and they believe that this would provide better security and enhance business activities and by extension provide remedies for their economic downturn (Udogu 2018, Akinboye 2017, Badmus 2006). Another point of view that is not quite different from the perspective discussed above was argued by scholars who see the quest for the establishment of local policing system in Nigeria as cultural and inherent in the character of Nigeria societies which pre-dates the post-colonial Nigerian state. Such scholars contend that a formation that either enforce laws or defend their communities has always been in existence (Banjo 1997, Egwu 2001, Sesay et al 2003, Adedimeji 2005). These formations were comprised of the local community which gave them the authority, credibility and the legitimacy to operate. Such example included the "age grade system" in the Western and Eastern parts of the country. It is these types of formations that were at the fore front of leading the political protests against perceived malpractice in Nigeria political space before the military intervention in the 1960s. The oil boom of the 1970s and the consequent economic prosperity distracted potential criminally minded individuals for some times as the improved economic condition suppressed the rise of criminality in the polity.

Some of the scholars added that the traumatic civil war of 1967-1970 entrenched in the people the conviction to give peace a chance. A breakdown of this peace began around the 1980s with an unprecedented increase in criminal activities due to rapid urbanization and the accompanying breakdown of traditional social norms and values as well as the decline in the socio economic fortunes of the period. The consequences of this the scholars argue are the re-activation and the strengthening of these groups by many communities in the country as crime fighters (Adejumobi 2002, Akinwumi 2005, Chikendu 2006).

A follow up to this sequence was the emergence in Nigeria of a new type of vigilante groups especially around the mid-1990s due to the rising tide of violent crime and frustration of citizens resulting from the inefficiency, corruption and the politicization of the institution of the police and the judiciary by subsequent governments. The proliferation of these groups was linked to the inability of the government to protect its citizens through the instrument of the police (Sesay et al 2003). The loss of confidence in the ability of the police to offer protection prompted communities to set up neighbourhood watch and vigilante services to either compliment or substitute them.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Findings of this study show that structural defects of the police formation in Nigeria are an impediment to their effective performance of their constitutional duty of maintenance of internal security of the country and hence the clamour for the establishment of state police in the country. Having taken all the arguments for and against the call for the establishment of state police in Nigeria, it is obvious that the Nigeria police need some form of decentralization. Since humans are not static, matters relating to humans cannot therefore be static. The clamour for decentralized policing cannot therefore be ignored. However, we cannot feign ignorance of the fear and apprehension that some state governors may likely misuse the advocated system of policing, thereby complicating the problems.

Be that as it may. The position of this work is that a compromise be reached so that the state governors as well as the chairmen of local government and other stakeholders in the security sector of a state would have a greater say on how policing and security issues are handled under their jurisdiction without having to create a separate force for each state of the federation. The state governments ought to be able to make adequate input on the use and operational control of the Nigeria police in order to discharge their constitutional duty and responsibility of maintaining law and order, prevent and fight crime in the country. This study found that based on the successes of sub-national security establishments and the sentiments of the overwhelming majority of Nigerians, the establishment of state police is desirable. This is understandable because every now and then, issues of security crop up and needs urgent attention in various parts of the federation which the single policing system in Nigeria cannot provide.

As identified, there is need to decentralize the task of policing in Nigeria. This will necessarily involve programmes of human development, sustained re-equipment, social repositioning and administrative restructuring. Against the backdrop of the main thrust of this study, we shall dwell on administrative restructuring. In doing this, the following points of recommendations are hereby advanced. The present structure where the Nigeria police force is the sole police organization for the whole country is simply defective and dictatorial as against the principle and practice of federalism. The single and centralized structure inherited by Nigeria at independence is a carryover from colonial government, which is now counterproductive and must be discarded. The Nigerian police need to be decentralized to enable them work effectively and efficiently. For this to happen, sections 214 and 215 of 1999 constitution of federal republic of Nigeria, as amended, which gave total power over the police to the president should be revised. The police as an institution should be removed from item 45 of part 1 of the second schedule and moved to the concurrent list in part 2, second schedule, of the constitution to allow the states to establish state police under approved guidelines.

Again there should be establishment of state police service commission in each of the 36 states of the federation. The commission would be made up of one representative of the federal government to be appointed by the federal police service commission to represent the government at the centre, two independent experts on security matters to be appointed by the governor with the confirmation of the state house of assembly of various states as

well as one representative of security professionals within the states. The federal police structure should be retained, with substantial presence in each of the six geo political zones. The federal police should also have offices or bases in each of the states and should concentrate on enforcing federal laws in line with the mandate given to them by the constitution.

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