

## Accountability Brief

*A Policy Brief from the Promoting Informed Dialogues on Security Sector in Nigeria.*

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# Citizens' Security and the Challenges of Promoting Informed Dialogue on Security

## Background/Context

The provision of security for citizens, as well as the centralisation and monopolisation of the means of legitimate force constitute the central feature and function of the state. In recent years, the Nigerian security landscape has undergone significant transformation. One of such transformation has to do with the emergence of non-state security actors that function as parallel entities for groups and communities that are excluded from the mainstream protection of the formal security institutions of the state.

These actors operate outside the formal state security structure with no funding or control from the state, taking on policing responsibilities and the administration of justice.<sup>1</sup> For instance, the emergence of the civilian vigilante group known as 'Civilian Joint Task Force (made up mainly of youths) in Borno State of Nigeria, represented an attempt by informal or non-state vigilantes to fill the vacuum created by weak capacity of the Nigerian state to effectively provide security for its citizens in the face of the activities of the armed insurgent group known as *Boko Haram*. The group is seen as 'an effective alternative to the governments' Joint Task Force.'<sup>2</sup>

Human security concerns associated with the violation of human rights by non-state security actors remains an issue treated with levity. So far, there has not been any

form of documentation and prosecution of persons involved in such violations, despite evidences of such violations across the country. For instance, the adoption of jungle justice by vigilante groups without recourse to the formal security institutions such as the police has been a major source of concern. The civilian joint task force that operates in Borno State of Nigeria has been accused of creating a detention centre where suspects are punished outside the formal judicial system of the state<sup>3</sup>.

It is in the light of the foregoing that this policy brief highlights some of the key findings arising from the implementation of the project on Promoting Informed Dialogue on Security (PRIDES), which was undertaken by the Partners West Africa-Nigeria (PWA-Nigeria). Key policy recommendations were made with respect to how informed dialogue as a basis for inclusivity in security and justice related decision-making process can help in transforming the security and justice landscape of the country for better service delivery for the people.

<sup>1</sup> Kwaja, A.M.C. (2013). Vigilantism and the governance of insecurity in Nigeria, available at [www.ssrresourcecentre.org/2013/11/08/vigilantism-and-the-governance-of-insecurity-in-nigeria.html](http://www.ssrresourcecentre.org/2013/11/08/vigilantism-and-the-governance-of-insecurity-in-nigeria.html)

<sup>2</sup> Zenn, J. (2013). Nigeria's civilian joint task force, available at [www.blogs.cfr.org/campbell/2013/07/nigeria-civilian-joint-task-force/](http://www.blogs.cfr.org/campbell/2013/07/nigeria-civilian-joint-task-force/)

<sup>3</sup> The Deputy Governor of Borno State, Alh. Zannah Mustapha, cautioned members of the civilian joint task force against taking laws into their hands against the backdrop of complaints that the group has resort to arrest and detention of suspects. For more see [www.informationng.com/2013/10/borneo-govt-cautions-civilian-jtf-against-taking-law-into-their-hands.html](http://www.informationng.com/2013/10/borneo-govt-cautions-civilian-jtf-against-taking-law-into-their-hands.html)

## Overview of Key PWA-Nigeria's PRIDES Programmes<sup>4</sup>

S/ No	Nature of Programme	Date	Location
1.	Methodology meeting on mapping non-state security actors in Nigeria, using the Security, Governance and Accountability and Performance Framework (SGAP)	9 <sup>th</sup> December 2016	Abuja
2.	Steering committee meeting on Security, Governance and Accountability and Performance Framework (SGAP)	24 <sup>th</sup> -27 <sup>th</sup> January 2017	Kaduna
3.	Convening on prioritising the voice of women's in the security sector	6 <sup>th</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup> February 2017	Abuja
4.	Harmonisation meeting on promoting informed dialogue on security in Nigeria	2 <sup>nd</sup> March 2017	Abuja
5.	Validation meeting on mapping of non-state security actors in Nigeria	2 <sup>nd</sup> March 2017	Abuja
6.	Strategic meeting on the role of non –state security actors in national security discourse	9 <sup>th</sup> May 2017	Kaduna
7.	Workshop on enhancing the use of ICT in counter-terrorism policy and practice	23 <sup>rd</sup> August 2017	Abuja
8.	Multi-stakeholder dialogue on operationalising community	26 <sup>th</sup> September	Gombe

policing in the North-East region 2017

9	Policy Dialogue on the Future of Community Policing in Nigeria	28 <sup>th</sup> November 2017	Abuja
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<sup>4</sup> PWA-Nigeria has detailed report on each of the programme highlighted in this policy brief.

## Programme Focus and Theory of Change

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**T**he goal of the PRIDES project was to promote informed dialogue on security in Nigeria. The actualisation of this goal is hinged on the extent to which the capacities of civil society and security agencies are enhanced towards the effective and efficient delivery of security-related services to the people.

Within the framework of the project, PWA-Nigeria implemented programmes around—mapping of non-state security actors in Nigeria; policy related discussions on security sector reform using the Security Governance Accountability and Performance Framework (S-GAP) tool, and organised a workshop on prioritising the voices of women in security. It also convened a strategic meeting on the role of non-state security actors in national security discourse; workshop on enhancing the use of information, communication and technology (ICT) in counter-terrorism policy and practice; and a multi-stakeholder dialogue on operationalising community policing in the North East as well as a policy dialogue on the future of community policing in Nigeria.

### Key Project Findings

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**T**he inability of the formal security institutions of the state to effectively provide security for the people, prevent crimes, as well as an inefficient justice system, have led to a decrease in public confidence on the state and its institutions, with vigilantes and other forms of community protection measures becoming a viable and credible option.

Even though the Nigerian state has the primary responsibility for security provisioning, the emergence of non-state security actors presents a situation whereby such state monopoly over the instruments of force is contested. In fact, the emergence of non-state security actors (for or against the state), such as Boko Haram, Civilian Joint Task Force (C-JTF), organised hunters group, vigilantes has created a regime of multiplicity of security actors and providers, with little or no coordination.

Community policing represents one of the most potent strategy for engendering or fostering closer collaboration in security provisioning and crime prevention, between the communities and the police. This is responsible for the improvement of the image of the police in the eyes of the people, particularly at the community levels.

The challenge of insecurity in Nigeria's fragile environment is exacerbated by the weakness of governance and the failure of state institutions to provide the basic enabling environment of safety and security for development. This is most visible in inner cities and distant locations out of the capital cities, where the capacity of state security agencies and justice institutions are out of their reach.

Shut out of protection by the state; communities have turned to informal forms of security and justice arrangements such as community peace forums, vigilantes, neighbourhood watches and community militias for safety and protection. These informal mechanisms of security provision starkly reveal the dire development conditions of those who cannot access security and justice, and who live on the margins of state protection.

Due to power imbalance, the existing mechanisms for security and justice in Nigeria does not recognise the role of women, particularly as it relates to their involvement in security and justice related decision-making processes. This explains the extent to which women are excluded from security and justice decision making processes in the country.

Despite the importance of ICT in the formulation of policies and strategies in counterterrorism efforts, the absence of a national action plan for the purpose of countering terrorism as well as the lack of a national communication strategy on the use of ICT for acts of terror, remains a major obstacle in Nigeria's current fight against terrorism.

### Pathways and Options for Policy

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**E**fforts towards security and justice sector reforms by the federal and state governments should be designed and implemented in ways that prioritises the voices of women. They should be

involved in security and justice related decision-making processes at both the elective and appointive levels.

In order to ensure coordination in the delivery of security-related services, the federal government should work with the state and local governments, as well as other stakeholders in designing a concrete mechanism for coordinating the activities of non-state security actors. This is to ensure accountability, transparency and respect for human rights and humanitarian law.

In concert with the state and local governments, as well as the communities and civil society, the federal government should put in place mechanisms for the design and implementation of a framework on community policing, as against the current situation whereby each community has its own unique mechanism and framework for policing.

In recognition of the fact that the present security arrangement in Nigeria is one that does not allow for security to be effectively provided for citizens across all the communities in the country, the setting up of community policing structure would help address this challenge since the citizens are involved.

The implementation of the action plan on United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 at the national state and local levels is an important step that would help engender women participation in peace and security-related decision-making processes in the country.

The Federal Government of Nigeria should ensure a well thought out and proactive policy on counterterrorism, which should also define how ICT would act as an enabler in its counterterrorism efforts. This should be anchored on, or integrated into the national strategy on countering terrorism.

## Lessons Learnt

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1. A coherent and well-coordinated partnership between civil society and the state is an important catalyst for promoting inclusive security.
2. Weak coordination and collocation among security agencies, as well as between security agencies and the people, have been responsible for the gaps associated with the design and implementation of programmes that seek to promote informed dialogue on security in Nigeria.
3. Security/justice sector reform/transformation remain the most important and potent vehicle for reconfiguring the fragile and uneasy relationship between the state, the security /justice institutions and the people. The focus here is to ensure security and judicial officials and institutions are professional, impartial, transparent and accountable to the people.

## Conclusion

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**W**hile the exclusion of citizens from security and justice related decision-making process has been a major causal factor for loss of legitimacy and credibility by the state, dialogue must be prioritised as the primary vehicle for promoting inclusivity. It is through informed dialogue that integrative and inclusive security sector reform/transformation processes would be guaranteed and entrenched in the country's peace and security architecture. This is one agenda that the PRIDES project has pursued through a strategy that is knowledge driven and consultative.