



Accountability Brief

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

28th June 2018

Non-State Security Actors in Community Policing and Election Security

About PRIDES

The Rule of Law and Empowerment Initiative (also known as Partners West Africa-Nigeria, PWAN) promotes good governance, accountability and transparency by expanding opportunities for citizens to engage in informed dialogue on security. As part of its Citizens Security Program, PWAN commenced a project on Promoting Informed Dialogue on Security (PRIDES) aimed at facilitating a holistic planning of security sector reform processes in Nigeria with a view to identifying good practices that can be replicated in other parts of the country. The project also aims to embed inclusive security sector transformation initiatives such as community policing and election security to improve citizen security in Nigeria.

Executive Summary

PWAN organised a 2-day Policy Dialogue on the **Role of Non-State Security Actors in Community Policing and Election Security Management**. The objective of the Dialogue was to commence the process of interactions with critical stakeholders on the possible role of non-state security and hybrid security actors in community policing and election security management. The Policy Dialogue, which held in January 2018 in Abuja, drew participants and facilitators from the Civil Society, state security agencies, officials of the National Independent Electoral Commission, members of community vigilante and neighbourhood groups, the academia and independent researchers and consultants, among others.

Key Findings

The recurrence of incidences of election violence and insecurity in Nigeria, is occasioned by the following factors, among others:

- Election security management has focused extensively on the security and retrieval of election materials to the neglect of human materials;

- Training, logistics, planning, monitoring and evaluation for election security deployment do not benefit from a rich interagency perspective;
- Inadequate coordination among security agencies around elections;
- Inadequate involvement of security agencies in the field in planning election security;
- Excessive centralisation of election security planning; and
- The non-involvement of traditional institutions to stem election violence
- The need for civil society organisations to re-focus their efforts in ensuring violence-free and fair election by designing proactive interventions around elections and election security.

Recommendations

From the findings highlighted above, the following policy recommendation were proffered:

1. INEC to refocus the purpose of election security by ensuring that training, logistics, planning, monitoring and evaluation for election security deployment places more emphasis on the security and retrieval of election workers than election

materials and benefit from a rich interagency perspective;

2. In view of the critical role that traditional institutions play in complementing the efforts of state security actors to effectively and efficiently protect citizens and guarantee election security, government should establish a community policing framework that ensures their participation as critical stakeholders at the community level in election security; and

3. To ensure regulation and control of non-state actors in election security, Federal Government should establish legal and institutional frameworks to coordinate the activities of organised community groups and other non-states security actors in election security.

4. CSOs should endeavour to deploy observers to rural and urban poor areas, and deployment to be based on permanent voters' cards (PVCs). CSOs need to move away from the political economy surrounding elections.

Background/Context

Since 1999, political reforms in Nigeria have resulted in the acceptance of democracy and its embrace as a legitimate and lawful means of ascension to political leadership and governance as well as changes in political regimes. This has occasioned the legalisation and institutionalisation of participatory and multi-party democracy, which has significantly widened the scope of political competition, participation, and inclusiveness among multiple political options and alternative choices for the electorates. While democracy is accepted as a legitimate and lawful means of ascension to political leadership and governance, power play and the dynamics of party politics among the ruling class elite in Nigeria, which results in ‘a-winner-takes-all’ scenario, have made elections, the means through which political leadership recruitment occurs, ‘a do-or-die affair.’ The consequence of this is that the electoral process has become vulnerable to a range of security threats against participants, infrastructure, information and materials. For instance, in April and May 2003, at least 100 people were killed and many more injured during federal and state elections across Nigeria.¹ Between 2006 and 2014, 915 incidences of election violence resulted in a total of 3,934 deaths across the country² including 11 National Youth Corps members who died in Bauchi State while working for the National Independent Electoral Commission (INEC) as *ad hoc* staff in 2011. Implicitly, therefore, election security, i.e. “the security of election officials and materials”³, has remained a formidable challenge. Yet, in all elections, INEC, together with state security agencies takes steps to ensure that sensitive election materials are secured and that voters, candidates, poll workers, observers, and other actors involved, experience a process that is free from fear or harm.

Arguments have been advanced by analysts and scholars as to why election insecurity in Nigeria has remained recurrent despite enabling policy, legal and institutional frameworks established to address the challenge. On the one hand, some have argued that elections in Nigeria entail massive mobilisation by INEC and that for the 2019 general election, for instance, INEC will conduct polls to fill 1,558 positions,

¹ Human Rights Watch, Nigeria’s 2003 Elections: The Unacknowledged Violence, June 2004.

² Shamsudeen Kabir Bello, “Political and Electoral Violence in Nigeria: Mapping, Evolution and Patterns (June 2006 - May 2014)”. IFRA-Nigeria Working Papers Series, N°49, April, 2015; Nigerian Stability and Reconciliation Programme (nsrp), Nigeria Watch: Fifth Report on Violence in Nigeria (2015), January, 2016.


³ Lai Olurode (ed.), *Election Security in Nigeria: Matters Arising*. Abuja: INEC and FES Nigeria, 2013.

in 120,000 polling units, involving an estimated 80 million voters, over 1 million various poll workers and perhaps 80 political parties⁴ and that guaranteeing election security in such overwhelming situation, has become a herculean task for INEC. Thus, securing such huge deployment cannot be left for INEC alone. On the other hand, election insecurity has been located within the context of the general failure of state security institutions in Nigeria. As Laurent Fourchard has argued, election security cannot be guaranteed in an environment characterised by “increasing wave of violence and criminality, the involvement of local groups in political conflicts and a more general framework of a possible decline of state law enforcement agencies especially in rural communities.”⁵ The foregoing arguments may well explain why even the Interagency Consultative Committee on Election Security (ICCES), which was borne out of a knowledge-based understanding and reassessment of election security on issues such as the lack of coordination between security agencies, and the assumption that every part of the country requires the same level of security during elections, cannot guarantee election security. Other issues identified include the excessive centralisation of election security planning, inadequate involvement of security agencies in the field of election security planning, inadequate coordination among security agencies around elections, and the fact that training, logistics, planning, monitoring and evaluating for election security deployment do not benefit from a rich interagency perspective. In addition, resource mobilisation and remuneration for security officers and men deployed during elections are often delayed or in some cases not paid at all. This sometimes compromises the


process of elections and leaves security agencies to the highest bidders. Some have also argued that civil society organisations (CSOs) have in most cases failed to deploy election observers to rural and semi-urban centres while getting entangled with the political economy of elections in Nigeria. Most importantly, however, is the argument that the none inclusion of critical stakeholders at the community levels such as traditional rulers, age groups and community development unions, which we may refer to as non-state security actors (NSSAs) in election security management is also responsible for recurrent challenges in election security. This argument is supported by the fact that even

⁴ Okechukwu Ibeanu, “Actors that Play Role in Election Security – ICCES.” Paper presented at the Workshop on the Role of Non-State Security Actors in Community Policing and Election Security Management. Organised by Partners West Africa Nigeria (PWAN) and the Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room (Situation Room) at Treasure Suites, Maitama, Abuja, 30 - 31 January 2018.

⁵ Fourchard, Laurent. “A New Name for an Old Practice: Vigilante in South-Western Nigeria.” *Africa*, Cambridge University Press, 78, no. 1: 16-40, 2008.



(R)esource mobilisation and remuneration for security officers and men deployed during elections are often delayed or in some cases not paid at all.



ICCES, with about 16 participating agencies (see Table 1), does not include the aforementioned groups at the community level.

Table 1: Participating Agencies in ICCES

1	Office of the National Security Adviser	9	Nigeria Police Force
2	Police Service Commission	10	Ministry of Police Affairs
3	Nigerian Air Force	11	Nigerian Navy
4	Nigerian Army	12	State Security Service
5	National Intelligence Agency	13	Nigeria Customs Service
6	Nigeria Immigration Service	14	National Drug Law Enforcement Agency
7	Federal Road Safety Corps	15	Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps
8	Nigerian Prisons Service	16	National Youth Service Corps

The Need for Non-State Actors in Election Security

The foregoing raises the need for a reconsideration of the imperative of the participation of non-state security actors in election security. If increasing participation of non-state security actors, in the security space has become part of the defining features of Nigeria's security architecture since the dawn of the twenty-first century, as some studies have shown⁶, their involvement in election may also not be out of place. Given that elections take place at the community levels, a community policing framework that ensures the participation of certain critical stakeholders at the community level in election security has become imperative.

By community policing, reference is not being made to the clamour or advocacy for the creation of state police in Nigeria by the government and some other individuals. On the one hand, state police may refer to a security sector restructuring or reform that seeks to unbundle the structure of the Nigeria Police Force (NPF), decentralise and devolve some of its functions and confer constitutional powers on States, as a tier of government, to establish and own their police, i.e., a police force under state authority rather than under the authority of the Federal Government. This notion of state police has generated interest among some critical stakeholders, particularly the State Governors, who are now

⁶ See Chris Kwaja, Kemi Okenyodo, and Val Ahmadu-Haruna, *Non-State Security Actors and Security Provisioning in Nigeria*, Abuja: Cephass and Clems Nig. Ltd for Partners West Africa-Nigeria (PWAN).

creating state vigilante groups. Some others with national base are translating the notion of state police into outfits that can translate to youth employment/job creation by engaging them in several community services, as a way of complimenting the efforts of the formal security institutions in intelligence gathering, etc. An example is the recent hue and cry over the decline of presidential assent to the Nigerian Peace Corps (NPC) Establishment Bill 2017 on grounds of "scarce government resources". Then there are the private guard companies (PGCs) and private security organisations (PSOs) being regulated by the Private Guard Companies Act of 2004, with approximately 1,163 registered private security outfits with the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC).⁷ the PGCs/PSOs are playing major roles in the security and economic sectors with over 100,000 employees servicing major industrial organisations and some government agencies across the country. On the other hand, community policing refers to a system of policing, which focuses on preventing crime and social disorder and problem-solving, through the adoption of aspects of traditional law enforcement, community involvement, ownership, engagement, and partnership. Under this framework, the critical stakeholders being referred to will include traditional rulers, community vigilantes and neighbourhood watch groups, community development unions, age-grades and youth organisations.

Although arguments against this arrangement have been adduced to the fact that communities as stakeholders with entrenched and vested interests in elections may not be depended upon to guarantee election security, experiences across the country show that in most communities, organised community groups have transformed the security of their communities by providing security and performing other important roles such as resolving disputes and domestic conflicts and enforcement of community development projects. What is needed, however, may be the establishment of legal and institutional frameworks that will provide a formal platform to harness and re-direct the productive energies of these organised community youth groups towards election security in collaboration with formal security institutions. This is very important because it has become imperative for government to utilise every available opportunity to address the challenges of youth bulge to avoid a recreation of similar security scenarios of monumental proportion as the Arab Spring in the Middle East and North African (MENA) region.⁸

It is against the background of the foregoing arguments that governments at all levels may work towards a decentralised system of policing that is also community service oriented. This may be one measure of strengthening the identified

⁷ This figure, confirmed from Department of PGCs, NSCDC Headquarters, Abuja, was correct as at February 12, 2018.

⁸ African Development Bank (AfDB), *Jobs, Justice and the Arab Spring: Inclusive Growth in North Africa, Tunisia: AfDB, 2012.*

institutional weaknesses of the formal security institutions. The proposal for a decentralised system of policing does not, however, negate the urgent need to re-equip and adequately fund extant state security institutions to carry out their functions more efficiently.

The identified factors that may well explain the recurrence of incidences of election violence and insecurity in Nigeria include:

1. Election security management has focused extensively on the security and retrieval of election materials to the neglect of human materials;
2. That training, logistics, planning, monitoring and evaluation for election security deployment do not benefit from a rich interagency perspective;
3. Inadequate coordination among security agencies around elections;
4. Inadequate involvement of security agencies in the field in planning election security;
5. Excessive centralisation of election security planning;
6. The non-involvement of non-state security actors in the planning and implementation of election security; and
7. The failure of CSOs to deploy election observers to rural and semi-urban centres and their entanglement with the political economy of elections in Nigeria.

Policy Recommendations and Implementation Strategies

The following policy recommendations and implementation strategies are proffered:

Recommendation One: Refocusing the Purpose of Election Security

In the past, INEC and election security management bodies had laid more emphasis on the security and retrieval of election materials to the neglect of human materials. This has resulted in the monumental loss of election workers. Thus, INEC and ICCES should pay more attention to and place more emphasis on the security and retrieval of people deployed for election work, especially when at risk.

Implementation Strategy

INEC and ICCES to ensure that training, logistics, planning, monitoring and evaluation for election security deployment places more emphasis on the security and retrieval of election workers than election materials.

Recommendation Two: Involving Non-State Security Actors in Election Security



It has become imperative for the government to recognize the role of non-state actors in community policing and work towards their engagement in election security.



In view of the critical role that non-state security actors (in this case traditional rulers, organised youth groups/age-grades, community development unions) play in complementing the efforts of the formal security actors to effectively and efficiently protect citizens and guarantee election security, government should establish a community policing framework that ensures their participation at the community level in election security.

Implementation Strategies

1. INEC to recommend to the President to expand the composition of ICCES to include certain critical stakeholders at the community level, such as traditional rulers, community development unions, age-grades and youth organisations for purposes of election security.
2. The President to expand the composition of ICCES to include the identified critical stakeholders for purposes of election security at the community level.

Recommendation Three: Establish Legal and Institutional Frameworks for Community Policy and Election Security

To ensure regulation and control of non-state actors in election security, Federal Government should establish legal and institutional frameworks to coordinate the activities of organised community groups and other non-states security actors in election security.

Conclusion

This policy brief contributes to the discourse on the role of non-state security actors in community policing and election security in Nigeria. While non-state security actors have been recognised and accepted as critical human infrastructure in security provisioning at the community level, especially in complementing the efforts of state security actors in effectively and efficiently protecting citizens, there is the need to carefully examine the possibility of their involvement in election security management at the community level.

It has become imperative for the government to recognise the role of non-state actors in community policing and work towards their engagement in election security. This will provide an opportunity for the engagement of the youths in very productive ventures, thereby addressing the security challenges that youth bulge imposes on the Nigerian state.

This, however, will require the establishment of legal and institutional framework for purposes of control and regulation. Against this background, government should establish a community policing framework that ensures

their participation at the community level in election security in collaboration with state security agencies.