



Security Sector Reform (SSR) In Nigeria: The Role of the Government, 1999-2019

Reformasi Sektor Keamanan (SSR) Di Nigeria: Peran Pemerintah, 1999-2019

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ABSTRAK

Sejak dimulainya pemerintahan demokratis pada tahun 1999, meningkatnya tingkat semua ketidakamanan telah menunjukkan bahwa sektor keamanan tidak memenuhi tugas utamanya untuk melindungi kehidupan, harta benda dan bangsa. Dewasa ini, marak terjadi penculikan, bandit, terorisme, konflik petani/penggembala, pengeboman, dan penembakan oleh orang-orang bersenjata yang tidak dikenal. Meskipun kita mungkin menyalahkan badan-badan keamanan atas ketidakmampuannya, penting untuk dicatat bahwa pemerintah juga memiliki peran besar untuk dimainkan dalam memungkinkan badan-badan keamanan dan sektor keamanan pada umumnya berfungsi secara efektif dan efisien, oleh karena itu perlu adanya reformasi. Dengan mengadopsi pendekatan deskriptif dan historis untuk penelitian dan teori kontrak sosial sebagai kerangka teoretis, makalah ini menyoroti peran pemerintah dalam reformasi sektor keamanan di Nigeria. Jika pemerintah memainkan perannya, seperti reorientasi militer, perumusan kebijakan keamanan dan pertahanan, investasi dalam penelitian dan pengembangan, amandemen undang-undang yang ada, pembentukan kembali sistem basis data nasional yang andal, dan kinerja yang tepat dari fungsi pengawasan, antara lain, sektor keamanan akan memenuhi mandatnya. Makalah ini menegaskan kembali perlunya reformasi sektor keamanan untuk menciptakan masyarakat yang aman melalui sektor keamanan yang waspada terhadap tanggung jawabnya serta menciptakan lingkungan aman yang kondusif bagi pertumbuhan dan pembangunan.

Kata kunci: sektor keamanan; reformasi sektor keamanan; pemerintah; pembangunan, Nigeria.

ABSTRACT

Since the commencement of democratic rule in 1999, the increasing rate of all insecurity has indicated that the security sector is not living up to its primary duty of protecting lives, property and the nation. Today, there is widespread kidnapping, banditry, terrorism, farmers/herdsmen conflict, bombings, and unknown gunmen shootings. While we may blame the security agencies for ineptitude, it is pertinent to note that the government also has a huge role to play in enabling the security agencies and the security sector in general to function effectively and efficiently, hence the need for reform. Adopting both descriptive and historical approaches to research and the social contract theory as a theoretical framework, the paper highlights the role of the government in security sector reform in Nigeria. It is of the view that if the government plays its role, such as re-orientation of the military, formulation of security and defence policies, investment in research and development, amendment of existing laws, re-establishment of a reliable national database system, and proper performance of oversight functions, *inter alia*, the security sector will live up to its mandate. The paper reiterates the need for security sector reform in order to create a secure society through a security sector that will be alert to its responsibilities as well as create a secure environment conducive to growth and development.

Keywords: security sector; security sector reform; government; development, Nigeria.

1. INTRODUCTION

The return of democratic rule to Nigeria in 1999 ushered in a season of reforms in various sectors of national life, notably, the communication sector, education sector, health sector, agricultural sector, oil and gas, banking sector, labour, the civil service, and the security sector (Zabadi, 2007). However, one sector that is critical to the success of reforms in other sectors due to its capacity to provide a favorable environment for their effectiveness is the security sector. Nevertheless, "a major task of the modern political system is to ensure the maintenance of law and order and, by so doing, underwrite the general security of the citizenry and ensure that public affairs are conducted without trepidation" (Faleti, 2011, p.148). It is therefore not surprising that past governments and heads of government since 1999 have had to pay critical attention to issues of security and have made efforts to transform the security sector to live up to expectations, yet the country is bedeviled with all manners of security challenges. Today, Nigeria contends with organized crimes, drug-trafficking, youth restiveness, militancy, banditry, kidnapping, sporadic shootings, mass labour strikes, and agitation for resource control, religious and ethnic conflicts, herdsman-farmers conflict, religious extremism, and terrorism in ways unprecedented. Ariche and Awurumibe maintain that "in Nigeria, there is no security of life and property. The state governors and presidents only protect themselves and their families, cohorts, and properties" (2017, p.84).

Faleti (2011, p.149) avers that, "Before the new wave of democratization that began to sweep across Africa in the early 1990's, one major issue that agitated the minds of the civilian population was the disposition of the security sector actors." In most parts of Africa, the security sector was so dysfunctional that it became a source of insecurity and threat rather than a source of protection for citizens. Since 1999, the security sector has been not far from what was the case under colonial rule. In line with this, Aluko (2013, p.108) maintains that "the security sector under the colonial masters was an instrument of oppression of the mass of the people." In fact, the security sector under various military administrations was an offshoot of the colonial administration. Unfortunately, the character of the security sector did not change much even during the civilian administration. In corroboration, Eboe (2009, p.2), while reviewing the security sector, argues that "instead of the security sector functioning to secure lives and property, they are functioning as sources of insecurity and tools of oppression, dictatorships, and maintenance of power at all cost." They have been accused of being used by those in power and those that can afford to fund them to threaten their supposed political opponents. That is to say that Nigeria's security

sector has not witnessed any significant change even with the inauguration and continuity of democratic government since 1999 till date. Faleti (2011, p.149) argues that "this, and the culture of impunity that left the impression that security agents were above the law, made many see security sector actors as significant obstacles to the consolidation of democracy and good governance" and the protection of the citizens. Thus, the urgency for reform in this sector cannot be overemphasized.

According to Ojatorotu (2013, p.194), "the main reason for security sector reform in Nigeria is to create a secured society through a security sector that will be alert to its responsibilities; it will be pro-active to nip perceived crisis in the bud before it snowballs into a violent conflict; and to create civil-military relations in a way that the civilian can confide in the security sector." In fact, the aim of security sector reform is to create an environment that is friendly, secure, and conducive to trade and business, increase the standard of living by reducing poverty, and where people can move about their daily activities without fear.

On the issue of reforming the security sector, it is pertinent to note that the government alone cannot totally reform the security sector. The state security provider, special statutory institutions, individuals, the media, and civil society organisations also have a huge role in reforming the sector. The executive (government, head of government, and/or state) has the final say on security policy and controls the security services through an executive management and administration system that frequently includes coordinating bodies such as national security councils or advisers. The executive is held accountable for its decisions through an elected parliament or legislature and sometimes through direct elections, but also through judicial appraisal, media scrutiny, and public consultation and debate. Therefore, the government (Executive, Legislature, and Judiciary) must play an active and leading role in the reform in order to position the security sector to live up to its responsibilities. It is against this background that this academic piece seeks to examine the role of the government in security sector reform in Nigeria.

2. DEFINITION OF TERMS

Security sector and security sector reforms are terms that are central to this work and how they are used is also highlighted below.

2.1 Security Sector

The term "security sector" has no universal definition. However, an exclusive security sector focused on the

armed forces, the police, and the paramilitary forces, etc., is no longer appropriate given the inability of these statutory security actors to tackle insecurity effectively. Hence, Aluko (2013, p.103) maintains that "... it has become necessary to consider private and non-statutory security actors as part of the *de facto* security sector." Accordingly, the African Union Policy Framework on Security Sector Reform (2014, p.5) sees the security sector as comprising "of individuals, groups, and institutions that are responsible for the provision, management, and oversight of security for people and the state." Explicitly, the security sector, as given by Fitz-Gerald (2004) and reinforced by Zabadi (2007) and Karim (2014), includes the following:

Bodies authorized to use force (the armed forces, police, paramilitary units and intelligence services); Civil management and oversight bodies (the President/Prime minister, the legislature and legislative committees, national security advisory bodies, statutory civil society organizations, the Ministries of Defence, Interior, Finance and Foreign Affairs); Judicial and public security bodies (the judiciary, justice ministries, defence and prosecution services, prisons and correction services, coercion such as the armed forces, the intelligence and human rights commissions, and customary and traditional justice systems; Non-state security bodies (private security companies, political party militias, liberation armies, Civil Defence forces); and civil society bodies (the media, religious, professional, advocacy and non-governmental organizations).

In view of that, a broad and all-encompassing definition of the security sector would include statutory and non-statutory security agencies. It is in the above definition that the security sector should be understood in this paper.

3. SECURITY SECTOR REFORM

According to the African Union Policy Framework on Security Sector Reform (2014, p.5), security sector reform refers to "the process by which countries formulate or re-orient the policies, structures and capacities of institutions and groups engaged in security sector, in order to make them more effective, and responsive to democratic control, and to the security and justice needs of the people." "Security sector reform concept is based on the reform and rebuilding of a state security sector. It starts where a dysfunctional security sector is unable to provide security to the state and its people effectively under democratic principles" (Atelhe, Abanye and Abunimye, 2016). In this paper security sector reform will mean restructuring the security sector to meet global security sector standards

in order to be efficient and effective in their duties and combat the numerous security challenges bedeviling the Nigerian polity.

4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: SOCIAL CONTRACT THEORY

This paper adopts the Social contract theory as expounded by Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) and John Locke (1632-1704). The theory of social contract is essentially a morally justified agreement made amongst individuals through which an organized society is brought into existence (Lawteacher, 2019). It is assumed that there is a stateless society from which individuals desire to run away from by entering a social contract. The social contract obliges citizens to respect and obey the state, in exchange for stability and security that only a system of political rule can provide (Esirah 2012; Lawteacher, 2019). In other words, this means that the individual surrendered his right to arm and protect himself leaving this instead to the state through its security institutions to provide this public good.

In the context of this paper, a country's security sector or security sector reform cannot be examined in seclusion of the state and since there is a contract between the state and the citizen, there is need for the government to play its role in reforming the security sector in order for it to live up to its responsibilities and provide the citizens with the security they need. It is within this theoretical framework, this paper is situated itself.

5. SECURITY SECTOR REFORM IN NIGERIA: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The Nigerian security sector is a by-product of the nation's political history. And "the Nigerian security sector reform has been largely shaped by her political history" (Faleti, 2011, p.151). Having ruled for thirty years, the military era was characterized by sundry abuses lack of respect for the wishes and aspirations of the people and oppression of the citizenry, which go to its apogee under the Abacha government. Under the military regimes, the security sector in Nigeria can be likened to what the case was under the colonial masters. It was an instrument of oppression of the mass of the people and in fact an offshoot of the colonial administration. For instance, Abiodun (2000, p.31) assessing the role of the police during elections in the first republic (1960-1966) and second republics (1979-1983) said that the Nigerian Police force has never been neutral in politics and are willing agents in efforts to destroy opposition to the ruling party.

For the military, while their regular interventions were often centered around restoring and saving the nation

from collapse, military rule had detrimental consequences on national life as it brought the nation on the verge of disintegration on three separate events-1966-1970, 1993 and 1994-1998. Faleti (2011, p.151) recounts that "the reforms that took place within the various military interregnums were tightly controlled by military elite with an eye on the need to protect their position of power." However, when it was vivid that their mishap in national politics was unavoidably ending, most of them repositioned themselves to partake in the new democratic order. Nwangwu (1999) succinctly describes how the military maintained their grip on national politics by other means:

Army "Generals" and commander-in-chief"... are not satisfied with governing with the gun, issuing decrees and barking out orders in their well-starched uniforms. They have increasingly found it quite exciting to civilianize from swashbuckling commandants to "popularly elected" and "democratically affirmed" presidents and bankrollers of political parties.

However, the stability and consolidation of democratic rule in Nigeria would basically depend on how well the security sector is managed by the civilians with the reforms which have taken place and are still ongoing. To recall, Faleti (2011, p.152) noted that during Obasanjo's administration, 100 senior military officers who had held one post or other between 1993 and 1999 were retired and prosecuted of a number of others who partook in gross human rights abuses that characterized Abacha military dictatorship (1993-June 1998). Still in 1999, the reform focused on civilian governance of the security sector on the basis of the following principles: acceptance of the elected civilian president as commander in chief of the armed forces, and the supremacy of elected officials of state over appointed officers at all levels; acceptance of the civilian headship of the ministry of defence and other strategic establishments; acceptance of the application of civilized principles to all military investigation, etc (Faleti, 2011).

In the police force, early police reforms in Nigeria included reversals of questionable promotions made during the Abubakar-led regime by the Obasanjo-led administration; the establishment of a ministry of police affairs, which has since been abolished, but resulted in conscription of more personnel (currently 375,000 from an initial size of 140,000 in 1999); and the establishment of a Police Service Commission in 2001 (Garba, 2014; Adekunle, 2012).

In 2014, Nigeria has been seen actively promoting

Security Sector Reform by sponsoring the First Security Council resolution on SSR, Resolution 2151. Also other policies and strategies aimed at solving the numerous security challenges across the nation have been made. In spite of all these, with the rate of insecurity in the nation currently, more work needs to be done in the a security sector in order for it to live up to its responsibilities.

6. CHALLENGES OF THE SECURITY SECTOR REFORMS IN NIGERIA

Some of the challenges of security sector reform were identified as follows:

6.1 Corruption/Embezzlement/Lack of Transparency and Accountability

Previously, inadequate funding was the greatest problem faced by the sector, but that is no longer the case because huge sums of monies are devoted to security in the national budget every year. Today, corruption, embezzlement and lack of transparency and accountability of allocated funds for the sector are the greatest challenges of the security. Ojatorotu (2013) stated that ...two previous Inspectors-General of police were grilled for misappropriation of funds meant for equipment and welfare of the staff of the sector for better performance.

Eme, Ani and Orji claimed that "the Nigerian sector lack transparency and accountability in matters of budget allocation. They further revealed that the proposed allocation for fiscal year 2018 was 75bn- a 200% for instance increased over 2017 figure. The breakdown of the proposed budget for military internal operations remains unknown. This opacity has implications for the sector and the nation at large" (2019, p.50). This has led to "unfavorable policies and poor policy implementation" (Amalu and Adetu, 2018, p.75). The security agencies lack modern and sophisticated weapons and equipments. Corroborating this, Ojatorotu (2014, p.196) stated that "the operationalisation of the Nigerian security sector has also been plagued by the obsolete security equipment the work with; this is directly related to the problem of funding." Most of them have and use old and outdated equipment unlike their counterparts in other countries that are using modern and sophisticated weapons. Maurice claims that "when resources are not mobilized for purchasing modern equipment, the security forces become handicapped and cannot carry out their responsibilities well(2003:p.34).

6.2 Poor Staff Welfare

Also, poor staff welfare (Amalu and Adetu, 2018, p.140) has been identified as one of the challenges of the security sector. Staff welfare in term of salaries,

allowance, incentives, accommodations, compensations of families after the death of an officer is poor and inadequate. Such a situation can make them impassionate about their job and very undedicated. Again, there are many men in the security forces whom both poverty and long-term unemployment were compelled into jobs in order to survive and feed their families.

Ojakorotu (2014, p. 195) states that, "perhaps because of the nature of democracy in the country, many of the state government do not have the political willpower and often make use of private security that can be ordered around to do anything. Their recruitment is done under the guise of providing employment...." For example in the southwest of the country, the region has established a regional security network known as *Ametokun* which is fully controlled by the region. Though the federal government called it out as illegal and unconstitutional, it has gained wide popularity (premunintimes.ng.com, 2020). Hence, lack of political determination challenges the security sector.

6.3 Wide Security Sector

The security sector is unnecessarily wide and this has rather become a problem than a solution to the security problems experienced across the nation. Today, most of security agencies perform overlapping functions which may sometime cause a clash with one another, hence, reducing their capacity for effectiveness as well as the synergy needed to rise up to the security challenges of the nation. For instance, both the military and the Nigeria Police Force have been performing similar tasks of managing internal conflicts. "This has not made efficiency and effectiveness in this area, as these operations were often accompanied by public outcries of disapproval" (Perry, 1999:30) The security forces often find themselves operating in difficult circumstances as it is and lack of this clear definition of tasks makes the performance assessment very difficult.

On other challenges include continued lack of clarity over the mission of the military, the issue of balancing the needs of defence with the needs of development amongst others (Atelhe, Abanye and Abunimye 2016, p.156-7).

7. THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT IN SECURITY SECTOR REFORM IN NIGERIA

Accordingly, the three organs of Nigerian government- the Executive, Legislature and the Judiciary are expected to play the following roles in the security sector reforms:

7.1 The Executive

Some of the roles expected from the executive arm of the government are as follows;

7.1.1 Re-orientation of the Military

The military should be the defender of the democratic political system without itself being a partisan political actor. The professional military was understood to be an instrument of the state for its defense and protection, but under the direction and control of a democratically elected civilian political authority. However, due to the military rule for over 30 years what to do with the military after transition to democratic rule in 1999 became a matter of top priority to the government. Therefore, if the new democratic experiment is to survive, the military had to undergo certain changes as a matter of urgency. The officers who remained in service were now to go through a process of re-orientation to the traditional role of the professional military. Government actions in this area came to be known variously as re-professionalization, restructuring, re-organization and even "down-sizing" of the military. To recall, Obasanjo's administration retired 100 senior, military officers between 1993 and 1999 and a prosecution of others who partook in human rights abuses during Abacha's military dictatorship from 1993 to 1998 (Faleti, 2011). These initially came through the Military Professionals Resource International (MPRI), a private corporation made up of mainly retired senior US military officers. The MPRI was engaged by the Nigerian Government to assist in reforming the military in the areas of resources management, civil-military coordination, doctrine and training systems.

7.1.2 Restructuring the Police

Meanwhile, the Nigeria Police Force, perhaps the security outfit that was in the worst state than the others also needed to be attended to urgently. The force was also a victim of years of abuse by the military authorities and its leadership. It was therefore overwhelmed by the upsurge of violence which followed the return to civil rule because it lacked the necessary equipment and morale to face the new agents of violence who were better equipped and funded, hence, the decision by government to increase the members of personnel in the Nigeria Police Force. However, the government must continue to implement policies that will address issues such as the attitude of the police, welfare and facilities, police response to unrest.

7.1.3 Formulation of Security and Defense Policies

It is the duty of the executive to formulate necessary

policies that would serve as the framework and guidelines for the effective reformation of the security sector. Today, there is the Grand Strategy for National Security by President Olusegun Obasanjo in 2000. The Grand Strategy sought to stimulate stakeholders to adopt a coordinated approach in order to strengthen security. There is also the National Security Strategy developed by the Office of the National Security Adviser in 2014 aimed at applying all elements of national power to ensure physical security. However, there are sectorial strategies such as the National Defense Policy, the National Counter Terrorism Strategy (NACEST), National Policy on Public Safety and Security, National Cyber Security Strategy. They are developed as responses to the identified threats to Nigeria's national interest. Their documents are derived from the Grand Strategy and National Security Strategy (Bala and Ouedraogo, 2018).

7.1.4 Establishment of Reliable National Database System

For the government to effectively reform the security sector there is an urgent need to establish an accurate national database on crucial issues affecting lives and property, national security and other basic architectures? The government must continue to monitor the activities of the National Identity Management Company (NIMC), Nigerian Bureau of Statistics (NBS) and the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) to ensure that they efficiently carry-out their duties of establishing a reliable database that will be needed in providing security for the people.

7.1.5 Investment in Research and Development

"Investment in research in the country is abysmally low" (Akintoye, 2012, p.2). The lack of investment in research may have contributed in the collapse of technology-based industries in the country, for instance, the Defence Incorporated Company of Nigeria (DICON) established in 1964 to meet the equipment needs of the Nigerian Armed Forces by providing arms, ammunitions and other defence equipment must be given more attention. Given the security challenges on ground, the government needs to invest heavily in such industries, in order to enable them create indigenous modern and sophisticated weapons and equipments that will enhance the capacity of the security agencies to combat the numerous security challenges.

7.2 The Legislature

The role of Nigerian Legislature in Security Sector Reform is to ensure the following:

7.2.1 Amendment of Existing Laws

The laws establishing most of the security agencies in Nigeria must be amended if meaningful security sector reforms can take place. For instance, the 1999 constitution made provisions for the establishment of the Nigeria Police Force as contained in part (iii), section 214, subsection(1), states as follow;

There shall be a police Force for Nigeria, which shall be known as the Nigeria Police Force, and subject to the provisions of this section, no Police Force shall be established for the Federation or any part thereof.

This provision of constitution is not only restrictive and does not conform to the reality in the nation. If security sector reforms would yield the desired results, the police must be decentralized and the states have to be constitutionally empowered to establish state police force. This will to a large extent bring police closer to the people and encourage active involvement of the community. "There is also the problem of roles and functions overlap in the laws establishing the security agencies in Nigeria which require urgent attention. Some agencies such as the State Security Service (SSS), National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) and Federal Roads Safety Corps (FRSC) among others, were created from the Nigeria Police yet; the roles of these agencies still exist in the Police Act" (Adekunle, 2012, p. 267). This development constitutes one of the causes of rivalry and clashes between the security agencies (Bala and Ouedraogo, 2018).

7.2.2 Decision-making/Implementation and Oversight Functions

"The national legislative arm is a bi-cameral institution known as the National Assembly (NASS) made up of the Senate and the House of Representatives. The NASS influences the national security process in terms of decision making and the implementation. The constitution provides a statutory authority through appropriation instrument, where the NASS can enhance or frustrate the implementation process"(Bala and Ouedraogo, 2018). Legislatures in most democratic countries perform oversight functions in the activities of security agencies. The Nigerian lawmakers are expected to diligently pursue this responsibility so as to ensure that the professional conduct of security personnel and roles expected to be played by the Executives are all in line with security sector reform.

7.3. The Judiciary

The judiciary (court, prosecutors and defence services) and the prison systems as well have roles to play in security sector reform. Their duty is to try cases and

deliver accurate justice. Also they are expected to “function according to the rule of law and are politically independent, that the penal system is structured to deter potential offenders and respect human rights...” (Ball, Biesheuvel, Hamilton-Baille and Olonisakin, 2007, p.5) Maurice (2003, p.12) however, decries the situation stating that “the judiciary which is expected to try these cases and deliver justice is itself no different from the police and the prison service.” The judiciary is in urgent need of transformation before security can be delivered to the people as provided for in the constitution. Reforms needed in the judiciary should include capacity building for judge and other legal practitioners, computer-based judicial processes, transparent appointment processes, provision of favourable environment for judges and judicial staff and effectively combating corruption in the judicial system.

8. THE WAY FORWARD

Security Sector Reform in Nigeria should be dedicated to effectively changing the security sector from one with military rule ideologies to that of democratic governance. Since the security forces themselves were a part of the infrastructure for authoritarian rule, this makes democratic control and civilian oversight of these forces absolutely necessary. Within this framework, the elected leaders and the government in general who are constitutionally empowered to direct and control the security sector must be seen to exercise such powers.

There is also the economic dimension to this issue which goes beyond the allocation of resources (Kalu 2006; Ering et al., 2015). SSR will require the rational of human, financial and material resources to make the security sector more efficient and effective. This means that economic reforms such as the must not sacrifice the requirements of the security sector to provide adequate service to the nation. The way to strike this balance is to acknowledge the concept of security as both state and human, this will enable policies with regards to the economy, social development, political and security to be coordinated to strengthen each other at the level of grand strategy. Essentially, security and development should be seen as two sides of the same coin where each contributes to the advancement of the other.

At the institutional level, SSR in Nigeria should ensure clear separation of tasks which the various state security providers or statutory security agencies are expected to carry out. There should be no room for institutional overlap between the functions of these forces. Therefore, SSR should address this area to save Nigeria from further ugly experiences such as conflicts between security agencies.

9. CONCLUSION

The paper is an attempt to examine the role of the government in security sector reform in Nigeria since the commencement of the fourth republic. Insecurity in Nigeria has become a serious concern requiring urgent proactive measures and concerted efforts on the part of all stakeholders. The security sector consisting of statutory and non- statutory security bodies have been entrusted with the protection of lives and property. However, the increasing insecurity in the country has indicated that there is need for continuous overhaul which can only be achieved through a reform in the security sector to meet up with the manners of security challenges bedeviling the country. The government who controls the security sector must take a leading role and carry out its responsibilities effectively in order to position the security sector to live up to its mandate of making Nigeria safe for its citizens as well creating a conducive climate for the much needed national growth and development.

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