

## **The Role of Nigerian Civil Defense Corps in Security Administration in Nigeria: Challenges for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

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**ABSTRACT:** The central focus of this paper is to examine the major roles of civil defense corps in security administration in Nigeria and the challenges facing the social order, peace and stability of the people as we are in the threshold of the millennium in the 21st century. The entire security architecture of Nigeria is face with myriads of challenges due to the tidal waves of criminal activities and general insecurity that pose serious threats to the corporate existence of the country. These challenges and the incapacitation of the extant security outfits necessitated the conception and delivery of the child of necessity named Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps in 2003 under President Olusegun Obasanjo supplement the efforts of other security outfits. This study found that the Corps was inhibited by factors like dearth of manpower, corruption, illiteracy among others based on the foregoing the Corps lacks the necessary weapons and gadgets to check the rising wave of crime in the society especially the with the emergence of Boko Haram in Northern Nigeria and militants in the Niger Delta.

**Keywords:** Traditional Rulers, Challenges, Security, Roles, Administration

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The entire security architecture of Nigeria is face with myriads of challenges due to the tidal waves of criminal activities and general insecurity that pose serious threats to the corporate existence of the country. These challenges and the incapacitation of the extant security outfits necessitated the conception and delivery of the child of necessity named Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps in 2003 under President Olusegun Obasanjo supplement the efforts of other security outfits.

What is security? security maintenance is broadly classified into two major management aspects such as direct and indirect matters. they are safety and protection of lives and property and dispute resolution mechanism. the issue of security is the principal purview of state as enshrined in the 1999 constitution (as amended) to include the roles of government in the provision of security and protection to the lives and properties of its citizens. these cardinal objectives are responded to at various levels by its agencies at (national, state and local government levels). each of these tiers of government has specific agents and institutions in charge of control and administration of security for the citizens. for instance, the army and it units are meant for the protection of the country from external attacks, the police provide internal security and the maintenance of the law and order for the good of the populace.

There are other para-military agencies like the Department of Security Service (DSS), the National Intelligence Agency (N.I.A), the Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA) the Customs, the Immigration, the Federal Road Safety Commission, the Security and Civil Defence Corp, the border patrol commission, and at the international community we have the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the African Union (A.U), The United Nation Organization (U.N.O) provide peace and the enforcement, peace resolution and ceasefire management or agreement. The Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corp is one of such agencies invested by the government to provide security and defence for people survival, the concern about this paper is on the role and the responsibilities of the civil defence in securing Nigeria. specifically, the paper aims at x-raying the challenges faced by the organization in the millennium for the 21st century emerging crimes and operations of the militants and insurgents.

### **II. CONCEPTUALIZING SECURITY**

By security it is referred to as a means or any measure taken to secure and safeguard lives and properties at either personal, corporate, public, charity or industrial or any other level. It refers also to the efforts by individuals or organizations taken to put a lock to secure things against lost, fire, war, or destruction or vandalism. it also means the various measures that can be devised to prevent and protect things, places, persons or properties from getting lost.

Alemika (2015) conceptualize that, security for a group constitutes insecurity for another group. He argued that security depicts reality, a feeling and condition and conceives security as a label attached to a

condition that someone considers undeniable. Thus, anything that threatens the welfare of the community is seen as a security matters or issues. the organization of security is mostly in two forms: that is the direct and the indirect approaches. the direct approaches are the entire aspects of criminal justice agencies such as the National Intelligence Agency (N.I.A) and the Department of State Security Services (D.S.S.S) and the rest of them. the indirect security agencies comprise of the network of *masu anguwanni* (village wards and hamlet heads).

### **III. THE NIGERIAN SECURITY AND CIVIL DEFENCE CORPS**

Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps is a para-military agency of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria that is commissioned to provide measures against threat and any form of attack or disaster against the nation and its citizenry. The corps is statutorily empowered by lay Act No. 2 of 2003 and amended by Act 6 of 4th June 2007. They are charged with the following roles and responsibilities of securing the state and the people for peace, justice, freedom, fair play and orderliness: The principal focus of the corps is in the area of broad based information networking monitoring of movement of persons; vandalism of all types; execution of all assignments as may be directed by the parent ministry in the interest of government such as monitoring and supervision of private guard companies.

Again, the Corps are charged with the responsibility to focus on complete rescue operations, crisis managements and complimentary security roles with security outfits such as the SSS, NIA, NPF, the Army, Immigrations, prisons service, as indicated in the gazette or as assigned by government from time to time. A hierarchical structure of command and control was designed with the Commandant-General as the Head

### **IV. THEORETICAL EXPLANATION**

The security outfits in Nigeria has been shaped and formed by the colonialists, The city states and the Royal Institution, in the *Dogarai* System under The Native Authority (N.A) during the colonial and Post-colonial era. It is with the main aim to protect the people's lives and the interests of those saddled with the management of the political apparatus of the state that security agencies were created. Thus, the entire criminal justice agents/agencies are meant to secure the state, punish offenders, the people protect and apprehend criminals not seen as friends for development but agents of oppression, exploitation and coercion. Security agencies are seen by the general public as agents of state to protect the interest of the people and the state by making the general public to conform and comply with aspirations of the citizenry and those of the dominant or ruling classes. This is the position of the Marxist theory of security. Therefore, for the purpose of this work, Public Sentiment Paradigm is adopted as a framework of explanation.

#### **PUBLIC SENTIMENT PARADIGM**

The paradigm states that, criminal law originated from the mores of the society i.e. from the customary habitual ways of behaviour, which is highly valued in the society. It argues that in every society, there is a broad cultural consensus on core or basic values, interests, norms, beliefs, customs, moral among others held in common by most members of the society. The Public Sentiment perspective further argues that criminal law is merely a codification of some of the mores of the society to which are now attached penal sanctions. In the view of this theory then, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps help in ensuring that laws, which are, shared customs and values of the institutions of the society, are translated into legal statutes (Haralambos 1980). Thus, the function forms the raw material from which the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps spring up to control the criminal behaviour within the society.

Consequently, the acts which the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps get to enforce are those that tend most grossly offend the major function of the society. Igbo (2006) and Gibbons (1997) capture that, the image of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps as presented here is the social agent which functions in the interest of the general public, or the society as a whole. The Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps as an important institution in the society as well as the law that they enforce are therefore product or expressions of the collective or functions norms and interest of the less privilege classes or social groups existing in the society. They are perceived as the neutral agents of government who deal with all people of different social classes; statuses, gender and age impartially and thus promote the common interests of members of the society. Yecho (2006) observes that the discretion which leads to disparity in enforcing laws and disparate handing of the citizens by the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps arises only when law is ambiguous and vague.

The Public Sentiment scholars argue that discretion, with its resultant disparity in policing which leads to discriminatory handling of the citizens by the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps arises when the laws are vague, ambiguous, over generalized and prescribed unrealistic moral idealism or contain inconsistent provisions (Yecho 2006). Similarly, brutality, inefficiency bribery and corruption arise due to lopsided emphasis on riot and military drills while in training, poor remuneration, lack of logistics, poor accommodation, lack of motivation, illiteracy and lack of cooperation from members of the public. According

to them once these problems are solved the Nigeria Security and Civil Corps would return to their natural role of neutral and impartial law enforcers as well as crime preventers and controllers (Yecho 2006).

The Public Sentiment scholars claim that the establishment of Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps is to ensure control and conformity to the norms, cherished values and to strengthen social cohesion as reflected in the law for the common good of the whole system is a constructive gimmickry. The inability of public sentiment scholars to fully appreciate the role of Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps in our society is due largely to their failure to link up the origin and character of security agents to the origin and character of the Nigeria state (Yecho 2005). Critics are of the view that the kind of explanation offered is teleological (Haralambos 2000). The society has pluralistic and antagonistic groups with different values devoid of consensual values. This is to say that the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps are not working for the general public but for the interest of the few who are placed in the privilege position. So their claimed that they are carrying out the role of preventing, detecting and control crime to ensure societal consensus is not true.

Again the assertion that the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps are neutral is not applicable in Nigerian context. They are biased and selected in carrying out role of crime detention, prevention and control. They incriminate activities of others while at the same time over looked activities of some who have committed offences under similar situation (Yecho 2005). Yecho further captured that; the inability of the public sentiment exponents to fully acknowledge the role of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps in our society is due largely to their failure to link up the origin and character of the security agents to Nigeria society. This paradigm ascribes universal standards to specific individual phenomenon without recourse to specific historical analysis of the uniqueness of that phenomenon. This consequently renders their discourse on Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps in Nigeria superficial and idealistic. Yecho (2006) aptly sums up that the inadequacy of public sentiment theory is that its theoretical premises produce a discourse that is a historical, empirically unsustainable and naively superficial. It is a historical because it fails to link up the origin and character of the Nigeria security operatives to the origin and the particular complexion of the Nigerian society. It is therefore inadequate in accounting for the crime preventive activities of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corps in contemporary society.

Finally, the corrupt nature of Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps which is attributed to poor remuneration, job dissatisfaction among others is debunked. The Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps practiced the act of bribery and corruption because of their quest to get rich over night; their inefficiency is because they do not appear to be as committed to their duty as expected of them.

## **V. THE PERFORMANCE OF THE CIVIL DEFENCE CORPS IN SECURITY ADMINISTRATION IN NIGERIA**

The Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps roles were specified and demarcated from those of the police, the paramilitary agencies and the army, navy and the AIR force to prevent roles clashes and duplications of duties and responsibilities. Since the formation of the corps, it has performed tremendously in the area of crime prevention. Chidozie (2009) observes that Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps have recorded a significant achievement and commitment in discharging their duties without arms. According to him, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps has done satisfactory work in the area like escort/public security of well-meaning Nigerian and foreigners, carrying out anti-vandalization, arresting and prosecuting of vandals, restoration of riot and conflict areas among others. For instance, Master web (May 31, 2012) reports that officials of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) Abia Command arrested seven persons (six men and one lady) for adulterating multiple products. According to master web the multiple products include finished manufacturing equipment and others at various stages in the adulteration process.

Substantiating further, Oche (2006) opines that, the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps has done well in providing security during elections in the federal capital territory during the April 10th 2010 elections in the six area council. He stresses that, because of the presence of Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps the election was violent free through the provision of adequate security at various polling centers and also within and around the vicinity. Commenting in the same view, Nkanga (2009) postulates that worried by the proliferation of unregistered security companies, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps is saddled with the responsibility of monitoring and supervising the activities of the private guard companies in Nigeria. He further maintains that; the charter aims at publishing among other things requirements for renewal grievance redress mechanism among others. Any organization or persons who did not renew it license will be sealed off. In Ondo state, men of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps sealed five companies in Akure, which did not register with the command.

### **Factors/Challenges Facing the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps**

Upon all the numerous achievements recorded by the corps, there are a lot challenges that hinders its optimum performance, these include the following:

- (i) Widespread Insecurity
- (ii) Lack of adequate information on insecurity challenges and their responsibilities by the general public
- (iii) Porous Borders
- (iv) lack of understanding of their actual roles and responsibilities of the general public.
- (v) Going beyond bounds in the discharge of the duties by assaulting, beating and inflicting corporal punishment on suspects.
- (vi) Arrest and detention without charging the suspects or accused person(s) to court of law

### **VI. MISUNDERSTANDING OF THEIR OVERZEALOUSNESS**

- Insecure security, security insubordination widespread poverty, wide gap, inequality and stratification between rich and poor in nigeria
- Corruption
- Extra judicial-killing, punishment and judgment.
- Military and paramilitary accidental firearms discharge killings and injuries.
- Power and brute of force show of wits.
- Security agents' collaboration with criminals/cultists
- State sponsored killings, murder, detention of people and property
- Security agents' assistance/connivance with robbers, armed robbers, thieves, drug barons, couriers and tenants.
- Security agents illegal supply of arms and ammunitions to criminals.
- Security agents' illegal revelations of authorities' secrets and classified information.
- Security agents being criminal informants and being hired killers/assassins.
- Security agents/police visiting private homes for monetary inducement/extortion and begging.
- Recruitment and posting of commands unpatriotic elements into the entire criminal justice agencies.
- Lack of regular training and up to date arming, policing and kiltling, gadgets of military and security agents/agencies.
- Corrupt practices among all cadre of agent especially through salary cuts and returns giving and taking through illegal patrol road, block collections and robbery.
- Discontent
- Lack of proper planning of urban plan
- Lack of general infrastructure
- Inadequate Personnel

### **VII. INTER-AGENCY/INSTITUTIONAL RIVALRY (IES)**

The NSCDC has been faced with conflict/jealousy, disagreement, incessant disputes and bickering through intra and inter security agents and agencies, the appropriate measure is to have effective synergy and Esprit de corps between the various security agencies which is now replaced with mutual mistrust, jealousy, hypocrisy, cruelty, suspicion and hatred. This led to the stringent calls by Nigeria police suggesting that the civil defence and the road safety to be scrapped or subsumed under them:

- Elite mentality in Nigeria some highly placed people feel that they are the law and the entire law is only meant to serve their personal interests only as such they feel they are above the law (Alemika, 2015)
- Inadequate resources
- Constraints/ineffectiveness
- Inefficient personnel, equipment
- Lack of proper welfare and entitlements giving to especially rank and file.
- sit-tight rulers' mentality
- Power hungry and greediness.
- Misuse of fake uniforms by commands through outright serving or on hire by serving agents.
- Insecurity and double deals by the security agent especially the national civil defence corpse.
- Offence and crime confession and ownership by suspects under duress and forceful confession.
- Obey before complaints order and punishment of innocent civilians or suspects by the security agents.
- Set up traps against innocent people by agents.
- Crime instigation against innocent people by national civil defence corpse.
- Lack of commitment, zeal and will to keep the peace and fight crime by many agents.

- Materialistic tendencies against their professional ethics and responsibility that is why they resort to criminal activities and connivance – they want to live big, own flash cars, fat bank account, own expensive mansions, wear glamorous dress flamboyantly, secure future of the marrying from upper class and be recognized by the society.

### VIII. CONCLUSION: WAY FORWARD

Within a short period of existence, the corps has gained popular acceptance and recorded high performance more than its sister agencies like the Police and paramilitary outfits. Despite these outstanding records, government should do the following:

There is the need for proper training of the Corps and appropriate demarcation of their roles and that of the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) in order to reduce or eliminate conflict of jurisdiction and sphere of operations. The proper training is pertinent so as to understand and enhance their roles/responsibilities.

To address the challenges facing the NSCDC, Government should also embark on a very thorough and massive recruitment of able young men and women to address the issue of death of manpower. The lack of manpower in the state often warrants incessant use of vandalism especially in rural areas by hoodlums.

There is the need to improve the wellbeing of Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps as well as increase their funding to address the suffering of the Corps. Apart from the period of training which was haphazardly done, government should be sponsor officers on both internal and overseas to improve themselves on new skills and techniques of combating crime in the society especially the intelligent gathering and surveillance among others now that the issue of Niger Delta Avengers and Insurgent (Boko Haram) which has become major security challenge in Nigeria.

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