

## **Overview of Security Sector Reforms and the Transformation of the Nigerian's Security Agencies**

**Atelhe, George Atelhe**

**Adams John Anyabe**

**Abunimye Sunday B**

Department of Political Science  
University of Calabar, Nigeria

### ***Introduction***

All over the world, meaningful development cannot take place in an atmosphere of chaos and anarchy. Thus, a secured environment is a sine qua non for peace and sustainable development. This is the reason behind every government making efforts to provide security as the basic necessity of governance. In Nigeria, right from independence in 1960, the country has been bedevilled with several security challenges that are both internal and external. Nigeria's historical experience is replete with various degrees of internal and external threats and unrests-ranging from constitutional crises; election crises; census crises; the civil war; inter-state boundary clashes; coups and counter coups and currently insurgency. Most often, these crises have aggravated and degenerated into unimaginable proportions due to the ineptitude and lack of professionalism on the part of the security sectors (agencies) to nip such crises in the bud. In the past, most crises which the country's security sector had to contend with were essentially traditional in nature and hence required traditional approaches to solving them. However, with the unprecedented growth of modern science and technology especially of information and telecommunication technology (ICT) and the concomitant unprecedented upsurge in crime especially the insurgency (Boko Haram) onslaught in the North Eastern part of the country. The inability of the security agencies to act proactively and professionally has led to the growth of multiple security threats on a sustained scale.

Again, the current general security environment in Nigeria today is said to be that of hopelessness and despair. Indeed, from all indications, there is a general decay in the security architecture and it needs urgent transformations and reforms. In the absence of functioning security institutions, stability, rule of law, security and human rights are threatened. This adversely impacts the prospects for peace and stability. Therefore, with the unprecedented upsurge in crime especially of terrorism and the degree of sophistry with which they operate, it becomes imperative therefore that the various security apparatuses/agencies be reformed and be better equipped to march the demands of contemporary security challenges in the country. This paper is subdivided into different sections ranging from introduction, conceptual clarification, the need for security sector reforms, the current security environment in Nigeria, the challenges, strategies for mitigating the challenges and conclusion

### ***Conceptual Clarifications***

Many scholars in the field of security have attempted a clarification on the concepts in this paper. However, the paper will attempt defining them. For Buzan (1991a, 1991b), security has gone beyond the state and has expanded the concept beyond its realist state- centric posture seen as a "derivative of power". In his book, "*People, States and Fear*", Barry Buzan points out that the concept of security was "too narrowly founded", and therefore, offer a "broader framework of security" incorporating concepts that were not previously considered to be part of the security puzzle such as regional security, or the societal and environmental sectors of security. His approach was ground breaking as he looks at security from all angles going from micro to macro, also addressing the social aspects of security and how people or societies construct or "securitize" threats. In Buzan (1991b), he deepened and expanded the discourse to five sectors in a way never considered in threats calculus by the militaristic and state centric paradigm.

He analyses how the five sectors of security (Political, Military, Economic, Societal, and Environmental) might affect the “periphery” based on changes in the “center” and insisted that the “five sectors do not operate in isolation from each other. Booth (1994) in a way supported Buzan’s broadening of the concept beyond a military determination of threats challenged his view on the provider of the human security.

He stresses quite explicitly that the state must be dislodged as the primary referent of (human) security, and encompassed instead a wide range of non-state actors, such as individuals, ethnic and cultural groups, regional economic blocs, multinational corporations (MNCs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and just about all humankind Booth argued that state security was used by ‘governments that posed as guardians of their peoples’ security, to cloak reality and hid what essentially was the security of their regime and its supporters and should therefore be dislodged as a primary referent of security’. Contributing to the debate, (Alkire, 2003) highlighted two differences between state and human security noting that, first, state security largely concerns territorial units and the persons who dwell within them.

Actions that promote the “human security” of other populations are usually justified instrumentally, because investments in their security are beneficial to national security; human security addresses all people; secondly, ‘state security is also significantly concerned with the relative distribution of power between states and with territorial integrity; this agenda is legitimate and lively and complements, but is not part of, the human security agenda’. The author also compares human security with human development, pointing out that both share in the ‘conceptual space’ of people-centredness and multidimensionality as well as addressing those who are already destitute; and defined in the space of human choices and freedoms. But, human security approach identifies and prepares for recessions, conflicts, emergencies, and the darker events of society, while human development is the flourishing or fulfilment of individuals in their homes and communities, and the expansion of valuable choice

### ***National Security in Nigeria***

A report of Think Security Africa (2011) on Nigeria opened with the statement that “the most essential function of any government is to have peace, meaning that security is also an essential pre-condition for the delivering on developmental pledges” this statement amongst others underlines the relationship of security to the development of any society. The report also acknowledges the privilege hegemonic status in Africa and the prevalence of insecurity in the country especially the domestic terrorism in the North East, the Niger Delta crisis and the “global threat environment” which it insist undermines development of the country; it therefore suggest eleven-point Nigerian National Security Strategy (NNSS) which compose of both offensive and defensive measure to make sure that Nigerian government move from reactionary to adopting preventive posture in curbing insecurity in the country.

Are (2001) descriptively looks at the National Security Council of Nigeria in order to outline the major players in the process of policy making and implementation. He named the Constitution of the federal Republic as the guide to the composition and roles of individuals and institutions that interact in a coordinating manner, to ensure the functioning of the National Security framework. The President serves as the Chief Executive officer, aided by relevant ministers and Service Chiefs; however, secretariat staff is essential part of the nomenclature. He lamented that some of the decision making structures had not grown beyond the paper when reviewed within a decade to become effective instruments as envisaged in their establishment. Besides, most of the actors were not adequately prepared for the roles, thereby leading to ineptitude and the Council’s meeting was relegated to informal gathering which robbed it of the strategic importance that it deserves.

With these shortcomings the author doubts the effectiveness of this statutory institution and others attached to it. These staggering revelations may as well explain the endemic corruption in the Security Sector of the country as outlined in the Think security Africa report; and justifies it emphasis on the sincerity and commitment of Nigerians saddle with the responsibilities, above other factors in achievement of a more secured nation But it is obvious that in security institutions, instructions are passed down in hierarchical pattern; given the contradictions in the highest institution as in others in this vital sector, little wonder why much have been achieved. This is illustrated by the reactionary approaches to security threats in all spheres of our national life. Are (2001), therefore conclusively recommended that “to make the national security decision machinery work well, statutory prescription have to be translated into reality through diligent staff action and bureaucratic support. The author however failed to prescribe the measures that would check the inadequacy inherent in the personnel manning these strategic institutions.

### ***Security Sector Reform In Nigeria***

Bendix and Stanley (2008) attributed the emergence of the Security Sector reform to the policy of the UK based Department for International Development (DFID) to provide assistance to country that were hitherto excluded from such supports by the imperative of the Cold War, “as well as to the new challenges posed by demands for an effective development donor role in conflict prevention, post-conflict reconstruction, and anti-terrorism” with the aim of linking these challenges with opportunity and as enlightened the stakeholders that “a security sector which promotes human development, helps to reduce poverty and allows people including poor people – to expand their options in life”.

They anchored the relevance of the project to African countries on “the continuing pervasiveness of violent conflict and other threats to security”, scholars relate current security problems to the specific nature of the African state and its institutions as legacies of colonialism; a monopoly on the legitimate use of violence was never achieved by the colonial state – nor was this indeed necessary for the purposes of extraction and military and political control, and would seem “an appropriate concept for African states aiming to reform their security sectors in such a way as to enhance democratic control, strengthen the security of the poor, reduce the risk of violent conflict and free resources for social change”. They authors observed that South Africa carried out the reform without inputs from external sources which was highly successful but over time has become part of development support from donor agencies, which many have failed to achieve the desired outcome as was in Sierra Leone and Liberia but urge the donor agencies to regard it as long term project rather than quick fix for these challenges in African States. However, the authors’ failure to identify contemporary Africans acceptance of western models and concepts as solution to their problems remain a gap in the discourse.

Hills (2010) take a critical look at SSR carried out in African Police Force. She argues that the concept is part of western democracies reform to enhance pluralism and perpetuate a factor which negatively affects its acceptance and implementation in Africa. Accordingly, “experiences in Sudan, as in Zimbabwe and Nigeria, emphasize that politics is the single most significant factor affecting police reform”. The author therefore suggests that ‘SSR is too normative, prescriptive and ethnocentric to be easily transplanted to the South, and that current orthodoxy will survive and mature only if international governmental organizations and donors adopt a more nuanced understanding of police forces that takes into account the social, political and technical realities of policing countries such as Nigeria, Sudan and Zimbabwe’.

Security Sector (SS) refers to those governmental institutions which have the authority to use, or order the use of force, detention, and arrest, to protect the state and its citizens, as well as those civil structures are responsible for the management and oversight; while Security Sector Reform (SSR) is the transformation of security institutions so that they can play an effective, legitimate and democratically accountable role in providing external and internal security for their citizens (Fayeye, 2007). He outlined the security institutions to include not only the military and para-military; but also the judiciary and foreign affairs as well as other institutions of the Nigerian State, such as the legislature which budgets are carry out the required over sight functions on other institutions in the sector. He outlined the process of effecting, the required reform in Nigeria as it is an ideal opportunity for the government to begin the serious task of “reconstructing the batter security sector – an architecture that has been used, abused by the military and democratic government in Nigeria”. Given the understanding that without viable and responsible security organization, it is unlikely that poverty reduction, democracy or human right can be sustained’. This contribution emphasized the inclusiveness of security sector and its nexus with every facet of the national sphere.

### ***The Need for Security Sector Reform in Nigeria***

According to Ola (2013), security sector reform emerged as the key concept in the 1990s among the security experts and democracy advocates. It is a relative concept that is mainly aimed at provision of both state and human security within a sovereign and defined geographical entity with government. The security sector reform policy agenda has developed over the past 15 years as the traditional concept of security has evolved. During the cold war, SSR was seen as secondary to which sides ruling groups took in the East-West conflict (Global Felicitation Network for Security Sector Reform, GFN-SSR, 2013). Since the end of the cold war, concerns have changed and security challenges have become more complex. It is now recognized that states have often failed to fulfill their security obligations, or have even actively compromised the security of their own people.

Consequently, the security agenda has broadened to include the well-being of population and human rights, SSR being part of the wider “human society” framework. In this context, security and development have become increasingly linked.

Nigeria and indeed Africa remained one of the worlds poorest and the least stable regions in the world. Conflicts, coups, dictatorships transnational organized crimes and weak central governments have characterized its recent past. These concerns continue to pose a considerable challenge to national and regional stability as well as the human security. Nigeria has been under military rule for most of its history since gaining independence from Britain in 1960. Elections in 1990 led to the first civilian government in 15 years, but Nigeria continues to have serious governance problems. In 2007, the transition between elected civilian leaders was marred by vote rigging in what international observers condemned as a heavily rigged election’.

Nigeria is the largest country in the West Africa sub-region. Its territory incorporates over 250 ethnic groups as well as a Muslim dominated North and a broadly Christian dominates South. The increasing politicization of ethnicity and religion throughout the post colonial period was a factor in the 3years Biafran civil war of 1067 that led to more than a million deaths. There has been no conflict of the scale since then but a myriad of smaller ethnic and religious conflict have broken out across the country. In addition, the insurgency in the Niger Delta area in late 2008 saw some of the Delta’s bloodiest fighting between government forces and Delta’s militants, with instability across Nigeria’s borders.

Furthermore, Nigeria faces a long list of security challenges, including: the proliferation of political, criminal, religious, communal and resource conflicts, poor detection of early warning signals and poor conflict management, the lack of effective and accountable policing, and limited parliamentary oversight (Global Felicitation Network for Security Sector Reform, GFN-SSR, 2013).

It is important to state here that Nigeria sees herself as West Africa main power economically and militarily. For instance, Nigerian forces have composed the largest part of intervention in regional inter-states conflicts. A key task of security sector reform in Nigeria has been to ensure that the military observe the supremacy of civilian institutions. However, difficulties with the political systems and the legacy of military rule mean that civilian oversight is still embryonic. Further, crucial challenges include dealing with endemic police corruption, incompetence and the crises of public security. Gaps in the provision of public security have led to formation and consolidation of non-state actors such as neighborhood watch/vigilante movements, private security companies and armed militias. Many of these non-state actors have become increasingly popular, politicized and co-opted by federal state structures. The judicial system is complicated by Nigerian’s federal structure. Individual states have their own government and legal structures. Sharia law is in effect in 12 Northern states, for example, reports from NGO’s claim that police torture of detainees is routine and justice and penal systems are significantly under resourced.

### ***The Current Security Environment In Nigeria***

The current security challenges facing Nigeria today are deeply embedded in its socio-political and economic institutions over the years. Challenges such as massive corruption, poverty, tribalism, poor governance, near-zero industrial bases, and a single line economic sector, terrorism, unemployment, continues to be a problem both economically and socially, leading to rising levels of crime and outward migration of qualified citizens to more developed countries. In a nut-shell, the Nigerian defective security architecture is manifestly expressed in the following areas:

- The Niger Delta Crisis; kidnapping was more pronounce in the Niger Delta region until late president Muse Yarádua extended Amnesty compensation to the militants.
- The emergence of the extremist Islamic group in Northern Nigeria called Boko Haram. Thousands of securities operatives have sacrifice their lives in protecting Nigerians from Boko Haram onslaught.
- The carnage between ethnic groups and political violence that follows almost all election results.
- The ongoing pro-Biafran agitators.

The types of security issues now plaguing Nigeria not only include corruption, human trafficking, drug abuse, murders, kidnapping, burglaries but also the recurring spate of hopeless killings and kidnapping in the Boko Haram set that was designated by the united states as a terrorist organization in November 2013.

Over the years, the security situation in Nigeria has not been palatable, rather it is getting worst day by day to the extent that the country was captured by Purris (2012) in the following words: “for the last two years, Nigeria was categorized as the 14<sup>th</sup> worst states out of 177 countries ranked by multiple factors in the Fund for Peace (PFF) failed state index”. Purris submission vividly captures the current prevailing security situation in the country epitomized by the ongoing war against insurgency and the apparent inability of the security sector (agencies) to contain the Boko Haram menace.

In the words of Olaleye (2012), the security challenge of the 21<sup>st</sup> century in Nigeria has become almost intractable, especially given the onslaught of terrorism, a crime hitherto alien to the nation security architecture. He further explains that this development clearly revealed that, the police and other security agencies were not prepared to take on the strangling challenge. The attitude and character of officers and men of the sector have not shown the structure of personnel with commitment to service. In Nigeria today, there have been various violent conflicts ranging from religion, ethnic, political and resource allocation in the recent time and the security has not at any time shown professionalism by curtailing any of the conflicts from degeneration to loss of lives and properties. The general decay in the country cannot encourage one to totally attribute the blame to the security sector, because the sector is part of the general society and is not immune from the effects of its challenges. Notwithstanding, the attitude and response of the security to crisis situation have shown an ill-equipped, poorly trained and unprofessional security sector that need urgent attention to be refocused. For example, in the various elections conducted in the country in recent time, the security sector has been accused of been used by those in power and those than can afford to finance them to intimidate their perceived political opponents. This was attested to in the various post-election tribunals across the country.

### ***Security Sector Reforms and Governance in Nigeria***

Security sector reform in Nigeria has become very imperative in order to create a secured environment through a security framework that will be alert to its responsibility such that it will be proactive to nip perceived crisis in the bud before snowballing into a violent conflict; to create civil-military relation in a way that the civilian can confide in the security sector and to create a safe and conducive environment for both local and international investors. Guideline and Reference Series (2012) corroborates the above point in the following words “security system reform is to create a secured environment that is conducive for development, poverty reduction and democracy”. What can be gleaned from the above definition is that, it is only a conflict free environment that can allow economic development that would bring about poverty reduction and by extension democratic growth and stability.

Finally, we concluded by noting that the security challenges confronting Nigeria appears to be intractable because of the defective and decayed security architecture of the state. In order words, the security sectors or agencies has not shown much patriotism and professionalism in dealing with the security challenges thus necessitating a radical overhaul, restricting and reformation of the security sector to better reposition it to meet the demands of contemporary security challenges in the country. In order to achieve the reform of the security sector, it is therefore suggested that the civil-military relations should be improved so that the citizens can become part and parcel of the security system. There is also the need to improve the professionalism of officers and men of the sector so that they will not be easily manipulated against the sectors expected roles as stipulate in the constitution Security Sector Reform (SSR). Before we proceed to examine the challenges of security sector reform in Nigeria, let us first and foremost examine what security sector reform entails.

Security sector is a broad term often used to describe the structures, institutions and personnel responsible for the management, provision and oversight of security in a country. These can include defence, law enforcement institutions, corrections, intelligence service, border management, and customs, elements of the judicial sector management and oversight bodies, civil society groups and other non state actors among other elements. Security sector reform (SSR) refers to the process of transforming the security sector – those institutions that safeguard a country and its citizen from security threats to ensure the provision of effective security to both the state and its people within a framework accountability and democratic governance. Security sector reform therefore aims to develop a security environment based on development, rule of law, good governance and local ownership of security actors. SSR concept is based on the reform and or 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. Parallel to that, the security sector can be a source of widespread insecurity by itself.

In this respect, an unreformed security sector represents an obstacle to sustainable development, democracy and peace. SSR is both an operational and normative concept which reflects the international security to reflect human security.

### ***Challenges of Security Sector Reforms in Nigeria***

In Nigeria in recent times, there has been a tactic able proliferation, commercialization and unnecessary expansion of the security sector without a corresponding effort in achieving the primary purpose of securing the lives and property as well as protecting the state from multiple security threat.

According to Ola Abeginde (2013), most of the obstacles to security sector reform are politically determined. This according to him is due to the nature of democracy in the country. Many of the state government do make use of private security that can be ordered around to do anything. Their recruitment is done under the guise of providing employment and the trend is mw fast spreading across the states of the federation to legitimize this trend, most of the states have been at the fore front of the recent advocacy for state policing that will directly come under their control. The challenges of security sector reform in Nigeria which have both internal and external dimension include the following:

#### **a. Balancing the Demands of Defence with the Needs of Development**

The concomitant effect of the new dispensation has been the challenge posed to sectoral reform by the management of security expenditure 'within limits of budgetary allocation'. Yet the process of reform needs not be antagonistic or adversarial to the management of military expenditure even as the debate about how much is enough defence remains a realistic issue on the agenda. In this regard, it is commendable that the government recognizes that strengthening the military professionally without corresponding provision of adequate resources and political support may simply lead to frustration and possibly unfulfilled and exaggerated expectations. On the other hand, it is important for government to realize that 'downsizing' 'right-sizing' and sectoral reform may actually lead to an increase in military expenditure, not a decrease at least in the interim.

#### **b. Impact of De-politicization**

Popular as the measures taken to de-politicize the military in 1999 were, the government attention still appeared to have focused on the dominant model of military–civil relations, which assumes a level playing field in which autonomous military professionalism can be predicated on 'objective civilian control' one that encourages an independent military sphere that does not interfere in political matters. In reality this perspective treats civilian control as an event, a fact of political life, not a process that had to be negotiated within a continuum, especially in states emerging from long authoritarian rule. However civilian control should not be seen as a set of technical and administrative arrangement that automatically flow from every post-military transition, but part of complex political processes which must address the root causes of militarism in society beyond the removal of the formal removal of the military from political power or the retirement of politically 'tainted' officer.

#### **c. Continued Lack of Clarity Over the Mission of the military**

There is a growing clamor for broadening the definition of security in the military reform agenda. This broader conception seeks to articulate security in a manner that the individual, the group, as well as the state may relate to it fundamental objectives of promoting and ensuring the right to life and livelihood. While the government has recognized the need to strike the right balance and understand the dangers that might accompany too broad conception of security which altogether dismisses the legitimate need for the military – as already evident in the carte blanche demand for the reduction of military expenditure in some civil society circles – enough is not be done to develop a consensus in society around this broader definition of security.

For instance, it ought to be possible for the government both in words and in deeds to demonstrate why post-military Nigeria ought to be equated to a post conflict situation given the level of damage on the country by military rule. As the Nigerian situation has amply illustrated in the democratic dispensation ( 1999- date ), the security required in the immediate post conflict or post military environment almost always requires a higher rather than lower security expenditure to cope with the impact of reconstruction through the provision of a safe, secured, and enabling environment.

#### **d. Democratic control and Accountability**

The lack of a clear pronouncement in the constitution on the issue of the military accountability to the people and their elected representatives poses another set of challenges. If the objective of creating efficient and effective armed forces is to be achieved, particular attention must be paid to the military in terms of its accountability to the executive, the legislature and the wider society must be clarified in constitutional terms..

#### **e. Reorientation and Re-professionalization**

Reorientation and re-professionalization requires focused. The question of an appropriate size for the security forces must be seen in an institutionally open and transparent manner and through a process of confidence building and conflict management but equally based on an objective threat assessment.

For example, if the military mission is primarily coastal and maritime, i.e. protection of offshore economic interests, and external, i.e. peacekeeping duties, then the question must be asked are the personnel currently emphasis in the armed forces order of battle suitable for the types of mission the military will called to respond to etc.

#### ***Strategies for Mitigation the Challenges and the Way Forward***

The following suggestions if religiously and meticulously followed will help in mitigating the challenges of security sector reforms in Nigeria thus:

1. All reform efforts should be based on the understanding that a security sector that is accountable to civil authorizes and ordinary people is structured to meet security threats to individuals, their communities and their country and is affordable, promoting not only the security of the country in question, but also the security of the region in which it is located and that at the international community.
2. Reform efforts and support should be based on local demand. This implies a willingness to provide support needs identified sub national and national level. This also implies a willingness to develop a reform friendly environment by engaging national authorities and civil society in its various manifestation to articulate to articulate needs and propose constructive approaches.
3. External actors willing to help in local reform conceived and driven reform proceeds will take time and require an interactive approach. Entry points are likely to be far from perfect and local actors will be learning by doing. Progress is likely to be measured in small steps. Patience and a willingness to take risks will be essential.
  - Adequate budgetary provisions should be made to funds available to the security sector (agencies)
  - Modern sophisticated equipments should be provided for the security sectors to make it match the growing demands of contemporary global security challenges.
  - The morale of men and officers of our security agencies should be boosted through re-orientation, retraining and adequate re numeration.

On the basis of the trajectory of Nigeria's democratic dispensation, several challenges will remain central to any quest for security sector reform. Nigeria is still experiencing some shocks in its political economy in its attempt to deal with its post-military, prolonged authoritarian past. While electoral politics is key to the consolidation of the democratic process, there are fears that severe security problems triggered by lack of access to resources might create deteriorating security challenges. Commentators cite the various resource control crises in Nigeria as the touchstone of the issue This underscores the important point that this is a process and that there is no teleological link between military disengagement and consolidation of democracy. Yet, deepening democracy is a core requirement for building an accountable and transparent state and achieving effective security sector reform.

#### ***Conclusion***

The vast extant literature, on security studies, scholars are unanimous in their view at the desirability of security sector reform (SSR). This is predicated on the fact that traditional approaches to solving security challenges are no longer adequate and because there an unprecedented upsurge in global crime and insecurity. A robust and a more dynamic approach is therefore needed to contend contemporary global security challenges. But what are the challenges on the way of security sector reform (SSR)? Although the need for security sector reform cannot be overstressed it is never the less hindered by certain socio-political and economic factors. The root of defective security governance in Nigeria can be traced to the affairs of the immediate post-independence years.

Barely half a decade after independence, the military intervened in its politics (1966) and for the next three decades with the brief exception of about four years (1979-1983), the country was administered by the military. Any discussion of security sector governance or reform in Nigeria must be seen within the context of long term military rule witnessed the near complete breakdown of security sector governance in the country including massive human right violations, destruction of esprit de corps in the military, corruption and truncation of democratic agendas. This paper therefore seeks to look at the challenges of security sector reform in Nigeria as well as pointing the way forward by way of proffering strategies for mitigating the challenges.

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