THE ROLE OF NIGERIA SECURITY AND CIVIL DEFENCE CORPS IN NIGERIA'S INTERNAL SECURITY

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Abstract

The trend of internal security challenges in Nigeria has continued to bedevil its political, economic and social stability as well as its sustainable development. The activities of Boko Haram insurgency, armed banditry, farmer/herder conflict, ethno-religious conflict, electoral violence, cybercrimes, pipeline vandalism, Niger-Delta Militancy, agitation for secession, and the activities of unknown are some of the various challenges that threaten Nigeria's internal security. The failure of the Nigeria Police Force to address these negative vices is instrumental to the establishment of other security outfits such as the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) which has been mandated to assist the military and other paramilitary agencies in managing threats to internal security in the country. This paper using secondary data analysis has identified the various roles played by the Nigeria Civil Defence Corps in fighting insecurity within the Nigeria Context. The paper established that despite their effort they were faced with various challenges that needed urgent attention from the government of the federation. The paper equally proffers various ways through which some of the challenges can be addressed some of which include personnel training, intelligence gathering, and increased funding for the security agency.

Keywords: Internal Security, Nigeria, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, and Security threat

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Introduction

The importance of internal security concerning human survival, national stability and sustainable development cannot be overemphasised. In modern times, placing a premium on the safety of citizens has become the hallmark of every leader or society that wishes to be perceived as democratic, civilised and advanced in the progressive sense. Furthermore, ensuring the protection of the lives, property and resources of citizens from the encumbrances of threat and danger has become the major preoccupation of governments that wish to be adjudged or evaluated as successful (Omah, 2013).

For several decades Nigeria has been constantly suffering from daunting security challenges, especially since the return of the country to democratic rule on May 29, 1999. The entire six geo-political of Northwest, Northeast, North-central, Southwest, Southeast and South-South regions coupled with the 36 states of the federation including the Capital Territory (Abuja) have all had their share of security challenges which as a result of increasing rate of crimes and reoccurrence of conflicts that has continue to threaten the country's internal security which is instrumental to democratic consolidation, political, economic stability and national development. In the same vein, Nigeria has continued to be affected directly or indirectly by the dynamics of the global environment with attendant national security concerns that border on virtually all aspects of her national life (Idowu, 2019).

These concerns often translate to matters that require the employment of security agencies (especially the armed forces and the police). While some of these threats may be considered minor, others may pose a danger to the unity and stability of the nation. The internal security threats to Nigeria include terrorism, kidnapping, indigene-settler conflict, ethno-religious conflict, pipeline vandalism and armed robbery. Others are corruption, transnational crimes, political thuggery and assassination, cross-border banditry, sea robbery, cattle rustling, herdsmen and farmers' clashes and proliferation of small arms. These internal security challenges necessitated the Nigerian government to deploy the military to manage them. However, the military cannot do it alone. Hence, the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC)

have been mandated to assist the military in managing threats to internal security in the country (Idowu, 2019).

It is upon such background that this paper examines the role and contributions of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps in tackling internal security challenges in Nigeria through ten (9) sections that include the introductory section, conceptual clarification, an overview of Nigeria's Internal Security, the establishment of the Nigeria Civil Defence Corps, constitutional functions of the Nigeria Civil Defence Corps, contributions of the Nigeria Civil Defence corps in addressing Nigeria's internal security threats, challenges bedevilling the Nigeria Civil Defence Corps in the fight against insecurity in Nigeria, ways of combating the challenges experienced by the Nigeria Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) and the last section is conclusion.

Conceptual Clarification

In this section, some concepts used in the study are clarified; these concepts include Internal Security and Civil Defence,

Internal Security

Security is referred to as a means or any measure taken to secure and safeguard lives and properties at either personal, corporate, public, charity industrial or any other level. It refers also to the efforts by individuals or organizations to put a lock to secure things against loss, fire, war, 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 (Idowu, 2019). Security for a group constitutes insecurity for another group. Security depicts reality, a feeling and a condition. On the other hand, Alemika conceives security as a label attached to a condition that someone considers undeniable (Alemika, 2015). Thus, anything that threatens the welfare of the community is seen as a security matter or issue. 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 the network of masu anguwanni (village wards and hamlet heads) (Alemika, 2015).

Civil Defence

Civil Defence is such a complex term that has no single generally accepted definition. It has been defined across the world by different and various scholars across various disciplines. The International Civil Defence Organisation in Geneva defines ''Civil Defence'' as those general measures which the public-spirited citizen is called upon or can be called upon to observe or carry out in a national emergency (FMIASD, 1994). It encompasses the protection of the life and health of the population from the consequences of war disasters. Moreover, Civil Defence's main objective is to control crises, which entails the preparation and implementation of all measures necessary put in place to avert the occurrence of a disaster (Abdulkadir, 2020). Civil Defence is to prepare civilians against militarism. It uses the principles of emergency operations: prevention, mitigation, preparation, response, or emergency evacuation and recovery (Abdulkadir, 2020).

In Nigeria's context, Civil Defence is referred to as the application of knowledge, measures, and practices that are necessary or desirable for the safety of the public or property and designed to guard against, prevent, reduce or overcome any hazard, harm or loss that may be associated with any emergencies (Abdulkadir, 2020). In the context of this research, it refers to the effort to protect the lives and property of the people against any form of attack, theft and any internal security threat or challenges in war and peacetime (Abdulkadir, 2020).

An Overview of Nigeria's Internal Security Threats

Nigeria is currently experiencing some form of insecurity which threatens the country's democracy, with great potential to impact its national development negatively. The spate of insecurity and threats to lives and properties in Nigeria has reached alarming proportions despite the increasing viability of the Nigeria Police and the military in the management of internal conflicts. The following are some of the internal security challenges confronting Nigeria today (Minimah, 2015).

Ethno-Religious Conflict

The manifestations of upsurge in ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria could be captured in the various violent conflicts that erupted in different parts of the country immediately after the inauguration of a new democratic government in May 1999. Cases of violent religious crisis were recorded in some parts of the country with ethnic dimensions. These crises which were mostly recorded in northern Nigeria have been between Christians and Muslims, thus making that part of the country notorious for ethno-religious crises. For instance, the February 21, 2009, ethno-religious conflict at Makama New Extension in Bauchi State claimed over ten lives, more than 400 houses were burnt and several properties were destroyed (Ugwueze, 2015).

Boko Haram Insurgency

Since the end of the Civil War in 1970, no other internal security threat has dominated national discourse like the current Boko Haram terrorism. The activities of this sect and others with similar extremist ideologies/narratives have been a great concern to the government and ordinary Nigerians. The sect seeks to impose what it terms an absolute Islamic ideology on the country, starting with Borno State. Their methods have mimicked those of other extremist groups across the globe and involved the sophisticated use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs), suicide bombings, beheadings, mass abductions and the sensational use of the media (Omede, 2011).

Kidnapping and Hostage-Taking

Kidnapping and hostage-taking are still prevalent, especially in the South-East and South-South Zones. These started as political actions in the South-South meant to attract external and governmental attention to the plight of the long-neglected region, but it has ended up as commercial actions in the South East for criminal enrichment of the self. These nefarious activities, no doubt, hurt the level of socio-economic development in the affected areas (Nwolise, 2014).

Small Arms and Light Weapons Proliferation

The alarming rate of small arms trafficking and proliferation nationwide has contributed to changing the face of conflicts in Nigeria. Thus, the internal proliferation of arms has threatened Nigeria's security. Security reports on various conflicts have implicated both Nigeria's and foreign mercenaries from across the borders in the trade in arms and use of the same. In the same vein, the capacity of local arms manufacturers and dealers to produce and sell arms within Nigeria is increasing by the day. These arms are mostly used to perpetrate political violence, kidnapping, armed robbery and other criminal acts within the country (Abolurin, 2010).

Indigene-Settler Dichotomy

The indigene-settler dichotomy is one problem that has made many Nigerians ask whether or not their citizenship is anything they can be proud of (Odoma, 2014). Although crises relating to indigene-settler questions have reared their ugly head in many parts of Nigeria over the years, the worst cases were recorded in Plateau State in recent years. The Hausa-Fulani, who have lived for years in Jos, see a reason to lay claim to Jos North Local Government, while three other tribes Anaguta, Berom and Afizere also lay claim to the same on the condition that the Hausa-Fulani met them there as indigenes. This indigene-settler conflict has claimed hundreds of lives and unquantifiable resources in a series of violent clashes and reprisal attacks (Odoma, 2014).

Niger Delta Militancy

The security challenge posed by the emergence of Niger Delta militants is enormous. The militant groups include the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF) and Niger Delta Vigilante (NDV). Their modus operandi has defied national security mechanisms, and the strategic dexterity with which they operate, coupled with the sophisticated nature of their weapons, and has raised such questions as to the source of their military training and experience. As a result of the conflict in the region, lives and resources have been wasted; hostage-

taking, shoot-outs between soldiers and armed militant groups, petroleum pipeline sabotage and so on have led to production shut-ins and deferments. Other manifestations of insecurity in contemporary Nigeria include armed robbery, political thuggery and assassinations, cult clashes, urban crimes, vandalism of electricity equipment, cross-border banditry, oil theft and pipeline vandalism, herdsmen and farmer's clashes and transnational crimes (Johnson, 2016).

Electoral Violence

Another major security threat that has continued to bedevil the country periodically is electoral violence during and after the conduct of elections across the various tiers of government in Nigeria. This could be seen after the 2011 general election, and the local government elections conducted across various states of the federation specifically Kaduna, Kano, Delta, Lagos, and Port Harcourt (Odoma, 2014).

Armed Banditry

Armed banditry is a serious security concern in Nigeria. It is more prevalent in the Northwest and North-central regions of the six geopolitical zones. Unscrupulous elements employed violent means in kidnapping, ransom taking, armed robbery and cattle rustling across states such as Katsina, Zamfara, Sokoto, Kaduna, and Niger State. Their activities have crippled various economic, social and in several instances political activities across the states mentioned above (Johnson, 2016).

Cattle Rustling

In Nigeria specifically the North-west, North-Central and recently South-East regions of the country, cattle rustling has contributed to growing instability and internal security as a result of increasing levels of violent crime. The Nigerian press is awash with stories of heavily armed groups raiding communities, killing people and stealing large herds of cattle. Also of note are the violent activities of the self-defence groups that have emerged in response. Additionally, in some of Nigeria's most volatile regions, including Northern Plateau and

Southern Kaduna, cattle rustling has fed into longstanding conflicts between farmers and herders, fuelling violence and deepening polarization hence, contributing to Nigeria's internal security (Global, Initiative, 2022).

Cyber Security Crime

Cybercrimes, as most people are already aware, refer to criminal acts such as identity theft and bank fraud facilitated using the internet. Sadly, to our collective shame, Nigeria is often cited as a breeding ground for most of these nefarious practices because of the activities of some of our citizens. In recent years, many criminal elements have been using these modern telecommunication networks to commit all manner of crimes that give us a bad image globally. Last month in the United States, a Nigeria social media influencer, Ramon Abbas, aka 'Hushpuppi' was sentenced in Los Angeles to more than 11 years in prison. Abbas, 40, was also ordered to pay $1.7m in restitution to two fraud victims, according to a statement from the United States Department of Justice. Abbas, according to the American prosecutor, laundered money from various online crimes including business email compromise, a crime in which criminals hack into email accounts, pretend to be someone they're not, and fool victims into wiring money to them. This no doubt has contributed to the threat bedevilling Nigeria's internal security architecture that the government is concerned about (Johnson, 2016).

Agitation for Secession

The resurgence of Biafra separatism in Nigeria is largely a reaction to perceived ethno-national superordinary as well as the compromised state-building capacity of the Nigeria ruling groups. The tendency to attribute the upswing in ethnic nationalism, separatist agitations and the ascendancy of sectarian cleavages in Nigeria to the widening of the democratic space since 1999 is flawed. Whilst every part of Nigeria is bedevilled with one security challenge or another, the most visible existential threats to lives and livelihoods in Nigeria's South-East are coordinated attacks on state facilities by unknown gunmen and the

brutal military response of the Nigeria state to the neo-Biafra separatist uprisings (Odoma, 2014).

Establishment of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC)

Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) is a paramilitary agency of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria that is established to provide measures against threats and any form of attack or disaster against the nation and its citizenry. The nucleus of today's NSCDC started operations as a voluntary organization; before it was appropriated as a statutory security outfit by establishing Act No. 2 of 2003 and amended by Act 6 of 4th June 2007, by which it was constitutionally mandated to bear arms. Its organizational growth has traversed two other phases in the past - voluntary and statutory eras; it is now in its full-fledged stage of development which is the arm-bearing era. The NSCDC was established in Nigeria on May 23rd, 1967 during the Civil War in Lagos (Oladiran, 2021).

It was initially referred to as the Lagos Civil Defence Committee with the fundamental responsibility of enlightening the Lagos Public on safety precautions during the Civil War. The Charter of April 6th 1968, however, made it possible for states that may wish to establish the Corps within their jurisdiction to do so. For about 36 years (1967-2003) the Corps operated essentially as a voluntary organization. But in 2003 it was established by an Act of Parliament as a statutory security outfit by the Federal Government and brought under the supervision of the Federal Ministry of Interior. The day-to-day activities of the Corps are overseen by the Immigration Prisons Services Board established under the Immigration and Prisons Services Board Act, 1986, as amended. The Corps became the 66th member state of the International Civil Defence Organization (ICDO) in Geneva Switzerland in 2004 (Alao, 2017).

Roles of the Nigeria Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC)

The statutory responsibilities and functions of the Corps are contained in both the Establishing Act (2003) and in the Amendment Act 6 of 4th

June 2007. The constitutional roles of NSCDC as contained in the establishing Act (as amended) are to:

1. Assist in the maintenance of peace and order and the protection and rescuing of the civil population during periods of emergency.
2. Recommend to the minister the registration of private guard companies.
3. From time to time, inspect the premises of private guard companies, and their training facilities and approve the same if it is up to standard.
4. Supervise and monitor the activities of all private guard companies and keep a register for that purpose:
    a. Periodically, organise workshops and training courses for private guard companies.
    b. Seal up any private guard company which operates without a valid licence.
5. Maintain 24-hour surveillance over infrastructures, sites and projects for the federal, state and local governments:
    a. Enter and search any premises and seize any material suspected to have been used in vandalism or the suspected process of vandalism.
    b. Enter and search premises of any suspected illegal dealer in petroleum products or material used by the Power Holding Company of Nigeria, postal services, Nigeria telecommunications or any other public utility or infrastructure (Abolurin, 2007).
6. Have power to arrest with or without a warrant, detain, investigate and institute legal proceedings by or in the name of the attorney general of the Federal Republic of Nigeria against any person who is reasonably suspected to have committed an offence under the Act or is involved in any:
    a. Criminal activity.
    b. Chemical poison or oil spillage, nuclear waste and poisoning.
    c. Industry espionage or fraud
    d. Activity aimed at frustrating any government programme or policy.
    e. Riot, civil disorder, revolt, strike or religious unrest.

f. Power transmission lines, or oil pipelines, Nigeria Postal Service (NIPOST) cables, equipment, water board pipes or equipment vandalism (Johnson, 2016).

7. Monitor the activities of religious bodies and trade associations.

8. Monitor, investigate and take every necessary step to forestall any planned act of terrorism, particularly:

a. Cult and ethnic militia activities.
b. Criminal activities aimed at depriving citizens of their properties or lives.
c. Syndicate activity aimed at defrauding the federal state or local governments.
d. Monitor, investigate and take every necessary step to forestall any act of terrorism and report the same to the appropriate federal security agency.

10. Provide necessary warning for the civilian population in times of danger.

11. Evacuate the civilian population from dangerous areas.

12. Provide and manage shelters for civilians during periods of emergency.

13. Assist in the decontamination and the taking of precautionary measures during any period of emergency.

14. Carry out rescue operations and control volatile situations.

15. Assist in the provision of emergency medical services, including first aid, during any period of emergency.

16. Detect and demarcate any dangerous area.

17. Assist the federal and state fire services in fire-fighting operations.

18. Assist in the distribution of emergency supplies.

19. Assist to restore and maintain order in distressed areas in any period of emergency.

20. Assist in repairing indispensable public utilities during any period of emergency.

21. Provide intelligence information to the military on any matter relating to:

a. Crime control generally.
b. Riot, disorder, revolt, strike or religious unrest.

c. Subversive activity by members of the public aimed at frustrating any government programme or policy.
d. Industrial action and strike aimed at paralysing government activities.
e. Any other matter as may be directed by the minister.
f. Have power to arrange and mediate in the settlement of disputes among willing members of the public (Johnson, 2016).

Contributions of the NSCDC in Addressing Nigeria's Internal Security Threats

The Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) since its inception have evolved from an insignificant status to an enviable height and has become an organisation to be reckoned with in the area of internal security management. The task of securing the nation cannot be left only to the Armed Forces and the Nigeria Police. The Nigeria Civil Defence have contributed greatly in the aspect of oil pipeline vandalism, oil bunkering, kidnapping, cult clashes, violence and has equally contributed to the evacuation of victims during the Boko Haram Bombing (Alao, 2017).

Evacuation of Victims of an Accident or Conflict

The Nigeria Civil Defence plays a vital role in safeguarding lives through the evacuation of victims of an attack, bombing or accident and taking them to safety. This can be seen during the Belleview air crash at Lisa Village in Ogun State in 2005, the Train derailment and petroleum spillage rescue operation at Apete in Ibadan in 2005, ADC air crash in Abuja Airport in 2006, Pipeline explosion in Abule Egba in Lagos, December 2006, Dutse River flooding in Jalingo, Taraba State, the Bomb blast at the Army Cantonment, Ikeja, Lagos, The Sosoliso air crash in Port-Harcourt, and the Rescue operation of a nine-year-old boy chained in a church for stealing soup in Ota, Ogun State, July 2016 (Alao, 2017).

Restoration of Order during Conflict

The Civil Defence were also deployed to restore order along with the Nigeria Police during the cartoon riots in Maiduguri, Borno State, and

its fallouts in Onitsha, Anambra, Enugu and Abia State. They equally collaborated with other security agencies for the rehabilitation of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the North-East, in 2016. Similarly, the Borno command deployed about 600 Corps to various worship centres in Maiduguri to assure worshippers of their safety during the month of Ramadan, in June 2017 (Johnson, 2016).

Prevention and Disaster Management

In addition, the NSCDC has contributed immensely to preventing and mitigating disasters and emergencies throughout the country. It has established a Disaster Management Department whose sole responsibility is to raise the alarm in disaster and emergency areas. NSCDC has been very active in medical relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction, as well as health care of the people during national functions like sports fiestas, religious crusades and events organised by the government and NGOs. The Corps has defined four areas/issues in disaster management, namely: prevention, preparedness, response and recovery. Preventive measures are undertaken through early warning conducted through aggressive and massive public enlightenment and education in disaster-prone areas. Preparedness is about the machinery put by the Corps to counter the occurrence or mitigate the impact of the disaster, whereas response takes the form of search and rescue operations designed to salvage lives, properties and the environment (Johnson, 2016).

Safeguarding Lives and Properties

Recovery entails relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction aimed at restoring normalcy. For instance, the Corps participated in the management of internally displaced persons (IDPs) from the Boko Haram terrorist attacks. The Corps not only safeguards their lives and properties from looting but also guards against further attacks. Terrorism and violence are the major security threats to Nigeria's internal security. These include violent riots, kidnapping, explosive bombing, assassination, incendiary attacks, herdsmen-farmers clashes and cultism. The Corps has collected intelligence on the activities of

different terrorist groups and passed the same to the appropriate authorities such as the Army, Navy, Police and the Air Force. Also relevant to this discussion is the training of the Anti-Bomb and Counter-Terrorism units (Johnson, 2016).

Fighting Against Terrorism

The Corps, in line with its mandate, has sent its officers on counter-insurgence training overseas and to competently forestall all subversive activities, the agency has set up a unit to coordinate all its anti-terrorism and counter-insurgency operations. Since the return of the Corps personnel from overseas training, they have assisted in reducing kidnapping, and cultism and, to some extent, foiled several terrorist attacks and helped in assisting victims of bomb blasts (Johnson, 2016).

Rescue of Kidnap Victims

The Corps cooperated with other security agencies to free a Lagos Monarch Oniba of Iba Land, Oba Yushau Oseni, from abductors in 2016. In the same vein, the Corps, in collaboration with the Kwara State Police Command, arrested about 40 suspects in connection with a clash among the Aiye and Eiye cult groups at the Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin, in 2015. Of late, the Borno Command of the NSCDC said it has discovered "Count Down Timers" used by Boko Haram terrorists to detonate explosives. The Commandant of the Corps, Mr Ibrahim Abdullahi, said that the instruments were discovered by men of the Disaster Management Unit of the Command at the scene of bomb blasts in the Kalari area of the state capital (Johnson, 2016).

Protection of Vital Infrastructure

The protection of vital key infrastructures is one of the constitutional responsibilities of the NSCDC. It is imperative to note that the security and safety of Nigeria have been undermined by the activities of vandals motivated by a variety of reasons, namely: political, economic, vengeance, sabotage, conspiracy and the rest. Vandals have destroyed petroleum pipelines, Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN) high-tension cables, rail lines and railings on bridges, public vehicles,

properties and utilities, among others. For instance, the Corps revealed plans by some persons to attack investments in the Mobile Telecommunication Network (MTN) in Bayelsa State as a reprisal following the xenophobia attack on Nigerians in South Africa (Johnson, 2016).

Prevention of Vandalism of Pipelines

The anti-vandalism role of the NSCDC is a key mandate that the Corps has carried out with competence and results. The Corps has carried out its role through media campaigns, public enlightenment and orientation, rating vandals' activities, vulnerability analysis, threat analysis, planning and preparedness. The success recorded by 2008, reported that the Corps arrested over 300 pipeline vandals in riverine areas like Ebonyi, Abia, Warri, Ondo and other axes (Johnson, 2016). The paper also reported that in Abia State, over 200 arrests were made and 53 cases are in the law court. Also, the Corps resorts to the use of force where clear evidence of pipeline vandalism is detected and the culprits can be identified. In this regard, arrests are made and the vandals are taken to court for prosecution. Similarly, the 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 the master web, the multiple products include finished manufacturing equipment and others at various stages in the adulteration process (Alemika, 2015).

Provision of Security through Private Guard Companies

In the area of private guard companies, the NSCDC has contributed to safety and security through the registration, monitoring and supervision of these companies. It is a known fact that state security agencies cannot cope with the volume, nature and dynamics of common crimes, hence the emergence of private guards to provide security to clients for a fee. Private guard companies have been established in every part of the country providing services for clients. However, the issue of private guard companies fizzling out or being unable to arrest culprits when crimes are traced to their doorsteps has become a thing of the past.

This is because the NSCDC makes sure that no private guard company is floated without prior registration, training, inspections and renewal of registration licence. Thus, the NSCDC in this area has enhanced the security service delivery of these companies, enthroned professionalism and created a congenial environment for private guard companies and their clients (Aderinto, 2002).

The Corps has also sensitised the private guard companies to make meaningful contributions to Nigeria's national security. The Corps within a year licensed 285 private guard companies, sealed 96 and renewed 600, while 210 are still waiting to be licensed. It has also reduced to minimal level crimes and other social vices in Nigeria's urban and rural settings. For instance, the Corps arrested a tanker load of suspected adulterated fuel in the Odukpani Local Government Area of Cross River State in May 2017. The Corps in collaboration with the Police, Army and Air Force recovered over 200 cows and sheep from suspected rustlers in the Birnin Gwari Local Government Area of Kaduna State. The animals were recovered during a raid at a forest in Buruku village, following intelligence reports from patriotic residents concerning the activities of suspected rustlers in the area in May 2017 (Abolurin, 2007).

Preventing Electoral Violence

Finally, the NSCDC has participated immensely in elections to enhance its smooth conduct. The Corps encourages voters and politicians to conform to the rules and norms of the Independent National Electoral Commission's guidelines. This is aimed at ensuring a peaceful polity even after the conduct of elections. It should be noted that the role of NSCDC is not only during elections but also before and after elections. In the 2011 general elections, a sizeable number of NSCDC personnel were noticed in all 36 states of the federation and the federal capital territory (Abuja), making sure peace and tranquillity existed among spectators and actors (Abolurin, 2007).

The Corps helped in the transfer of equipment and materials (sensitive and non-sensitive) needed for the elections. In addition, the Corps recorded a significant achievement during the 2015 general

elections. The NSCDC deployed its officers for effective monitoring before, during and after the elections. The deployment of Corps personnel was to identify black spots with the collaborative efforts of all security apparatuses to ensure hitch-free polls. In short, the deployment of the Corps personnel was to ensure the effective protection of residents and government installations against attack during the polls. About 60,000 of the Corps personnel were deployed for this task. In the same vein, the Corps deployed dogs which were used to detect improvised explosive devices (IEDs). The agency also put in place the use of forensic psychologists and the deployment of modern surveillance vehicles to ensure a peaceful atmosphere for the conduct of the 2015 general elections (Abolurin, 2007).

Challenges Bedevilling the Nigeria Civil Defence Corps in the fight against insecurity in Nigeria

The challenges confronting the NSCDC within the context of internal security management are enormous. These challenges must be seen as problems that must be attended to urgently to restore the reputation of the country that has been dragged in the mud before the comity of nations owing to the present internal security predicament in Nigeria.

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 Nigerian police suggesting that civil defence and road safety be scrapped or subsumed under them (Abolurin, 2007).

The NSCDC is ill-equipped to meet the present internal security challenges in the country. The most common weapons available to the agency according to a personal interview with an officer of NSCDC are G3 and AK 47. It was observed that the Nigeria Army trained the NSCDC personnel on the stripling and assembling of G3 and AK 47 rifles, description of the G3 rifle, arms maintenance and shooting positions. However, the criminals that the Corps daily confronts come

up with more sophisticated weapons, making it difficult for the Corps to overcome them in some cases (Alao, 2017).

The Corps has serious challenges in the area of logistics. Not only those vehicles are in short supply, but the available ones cannot match the terrain on which they operate. The vehicles are either old or by design not good for paramilitary operations. For instance, the oil pipeline vandals operate inside the bush, sometimes mostly in rough terrain where only vehicles with high-ground clearance and four-wheel drive could effectively be used for operations. Given this situation, the Corps should be equipped with enough vehicles of paramilitary design (Alao, 2017).

The state governments have not been fully supporting the NSCDC as a law-enforcement agency. The federal government cannot do it alone. This is why the state governments have been assisting the Nigeria Police Force with patrol vehicles, armoured personnel carriers, bullet-proof vests and helicopters. Thus, for effective performance, state governments should extend the same to the NSCDC (Abolurin, 2007).

Some law-enforcement agencies which have been regularised before the NSCDC do act as if they are superior to the NSCDC. The NSCDC is now in rivalry with the police. The police authorities have been protesting the establishment of the NSCDC, stressing that the Corps is performing its duties. While the police have had more clashes with the Army, Navy and Air Force, they also engage in a serious superiority contest with the NSCDC (Abolurin, 2007).

Lack of adequate information on insecurity challenges and their responsibilities by the general public. Lack of understanding of their actual roles and responsibilities of the general public. Going beyond bounds in the discharge of the duties by assaulting, beating and inflicting corporal punishment on suspects. (Arrest and detention without charging the suspects or accused person(s) to the court of law) (Abolurin, 2007).

Ways of Combating the Challenges experienced by the Nigeria Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC)

Since the establishment of the NSCDC, the corps has gained popular acceptance and recorded high performance unlike some of its sister agencies like the Police and other paramilitary outfits. Despite these outstanding recognition and acceptability, there is the need for the government to ensure proper training of the Corps and appropriate demarcation of their roles and that of the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) to reduce or eliminate conflict of jurisdiction and sphere of operations. The proper training is pertinent to understand and enhance their roles/responsibilities. To address the challenges facing the NSCDC, the Government should also embark on a very thorough and massive recruitment of able young men and women to address the issue of the death of manpower (Alao, 2017).

The lack of manpower in the state often warrants incessant use of vandalism especially in rural areas by hoodlums. There is a need to improve the well-being of the 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, the government should sponsor officers both internal and overseas to improve themselves on new skills and techniques of combating crime in society especially intelligence 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 (Alao, 2017).

There is a need for the NSCDC to focus on a long-term strategy for grass-roots intelligence security and civil defence operations, diligently assess new and emerging threats to national security, and develop the ability to initiate measures in terms of intelligence networking and information gathering both as short- and long-term projections. There is a need to equally monitor and upgrade existing security mechanisms to commensurate with the level of identified threat, especially in this state of heightened insecurity in Nigeria.

Conclusion

This paper has made an in-depth analysis of the nature of Nigeria's internal security threat, and the establishment of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps as well as their constitutional roles and responsibilities. The paper established that the Nigeria Civil Defence Corps has been playing a vital role in fighting Nigeria's internal security challenges. Despite their effort in fighting insecurity in Nigeria, it has been identified that the security outfit experienced various challenges that needed the immediate attention of the government in addressing them lastly; the paper identified various ways through which some of the aforementioned challenges can be addressed.

Recommendations

1. Increase funding for the corps to increase its productivity and effectiveness
2. Training of personnel on how to carry out the security outfit's defined objectives so as not to interfere with the duties of other sister agencies.
3. The corps should have increased logistics supply and the personnel should be well equipped to respond to the current internal security threat across the country.

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