



# **The Efficacy of Regional Security Outfits in Providing Security in Nigeria: An Assessment of Amotekun Security Outfit in the South West Region of Nigeria**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Nigeria is currently confronted with myriads of challenges which are rapidly stagnating the development and progress of her core productive and sensitive sectors. One of the most piercing problem is that of insecurity. It has succeeded in labelling Nigeria repulsively in the international community. However, till date, government efforts toward curtailing this challenge has not recorded any positive result. It is within this premise that this paper sets out to examine the role of regional security outfits in reference to Amotekun. To achieve its objectives, this study adopted the historical research design and obtained data through secondary sources, via survey of textbooks, journal publications, dailies and periodicals, government official documents and internet sources. It also adopted Victor H. Vroom's Expectancy theory propounded in 1964 to juxtapose the need for the Federal government to provide constitutional backing to regional security outfits such as the South West security outfit, "Amotekun" in complementing the efforts of the state security agencies in the fight against insecurity in the country. While the study is conscious of the preceding efforts toward achieving national or internal security, it still beholds untapped resources in it for sustainable security in Nigeria. Hence, the paper strongly advocates a New Crusade on National Integration (NCNI) which will immensely guarantee unity, peaceful co-existence and security in Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Security, Insecurity, Regional Security, Amotekun, Nigeria.

## **I. Introduction**

The need for security of lives and properties was the essence of Thomas Hobbes' "Social Contract theory" between the citizens and the state (Hobbes, 1996; Aina, 2020). Security therefore should be a fundamental right of every Nigerian citizen, and a mandatory obligation of the state to the people. Under the present administration of President Muhammadu Buhari, Nigeria has experienced recession twice, and a triple effect in the insurrection of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) in the South-East region of the country, and in the North-East, jihadist Boko Haram and the Islamic West African Province (ISWAP), banditry and terrorists crises in the North-West, and same playing out in the farmers-herders conflicts in the North-Central, Middle Belt and South-West, and militancy and sea piracy in South-South, and general crises of unlawful abduction and kidnapping for either fetish reasons or for ransom all over the country (Gideon, 2021).

The clamour for regional partnership in the regions of Nigeria have taken the frontline of national dailies following the increasing rate of insecurity, particularly, in the Northern part of the country. The general consensus concerning the disturbing national issues is that, establishing regional security outfits or regional security partnership with the central government means adopting policing perspective that will exceeds the standard of law enforcement and security of lives and properties of the Nigerian citizens. It appears that the pattern of insecurity in the country questions the rational of retention of the statutory role of maintaining law and order, and enforcement in the hands of the security agency of the Police Force while other options are available to complement the efforts of the government in the fight against insurgency, terrorism and other forms of criminal activities that have enveloped the country in recent time.

As Obarisiagbon and Akintoye (2013) puts it, proliferation of this wide outfit called regional security outfits, undeniably, will contribute to orderliness and security of lives and properties of the regional dwellers across the country. Abolade (2021) argued that in the face of these unending and incessant attacks on non-combatant civilian population in towns and villages all over the country by these insurgent groups of the Boko Haram Islamic sect and ISWAP in North-East Nigeria, as well as banditry, kidnappings for ransom, armed robbery, and the self-styled Fulani herdsman attacks in the North-Central, and now in other parts of the country, the clamour for the establishment of regional security outfits have gained momentum. Police Chief, State Governors, government officials, the academic, traditional rulers, community leaders and the media, are currently assessing the need for proliferation of regional or states' based security outfits as evidenced in the South-West "Amotekun" security outfit, and "Ebube Agu" security outfit in South-Eastern Nigeria by the Governors of the South-East states (Abolade, 2021).

Nte and Oluka (2020) argued "that the forceful occupation and seizure of some of the communities and the recent sporadic onslaught on communities in the North-Central region of the country particularly in Benue, Plateau and Taraba States, and now in Southern part of the country under the guise of

Fulani herdsmen and farmers conflict, have certainly defied the capacity and competence of the conventional security apparatuses of the state leading to the question as to what could be done to combat these perennial security challenges in the country". Adishi and Oluka (2018) argued "that no Nigerian citizen is immune to the menace orchestrated by these insurgent and criminal gangs, because it could happen to anyone, any time and any day". Since the resurgence of the nihilist Boko Haram and ISWAP, and now the Fulani herdsmen marauders and banditry, several questions have been raised regarding the logicity of the Nigerian constitution in making policing the exclusive affair of the Federal Government. In the first place, it needs to be restated that the whole idea of a centralised security arrangement arose out of the desire to quench every real or imagined agitation for self-determination or resource control by any traumatised or marginalised segments of the Nigerian nation (Adishi & Oluka, 2018:12).

Inarguably, protecting lives and properties is the responsibility of a responsible government, and one of its mandatory obligations to the citizens and a prerequisite for socio-political and economic development of any modern state. On the contrary, the Nigeria situation has often been subjected to questioning following the inability of the federal government and its security agencies to sufficiently provide the citizens the needed protection from these nihilist elements of the Boko Haram terrorist organisations and ISWAP coupled with the onslaughts of the bandits, kidnapers, armed robbers, Fulani herdsmen marauders against innocent citizens, and other forms of civil offences such as ritual killings, that have become a commonplace in Nigeria. Okokwo, Popoola and Afekuro (2021) argued that, "the challenges emanating from the comatose security challenges in Nigeria has heightened the clamour for constitutional creation of regional or state security outfits or what is also refers to as 'community policing', as well as strengthening of vigilante groups already in existence in some states and local government areas across the country". The role of the Nigeria state in policing has attracted a lot of controversies and some of which stems from the argument that establishing and empowering non-state actors or private individuals to provide the much needed justice and security in the country may weaken not just the state security agencies but also the state itself.

Okereka, Efebeh and Oluka (2020) argued "that the activities of the insurgent groups and criminal gangs in the forms of Boko Haram Islamic Organisation, ISWAP, banditry, the self-styled Fulani herdsmen and significant others, and the incessant disregards of human dignities by the security personnel and the insurgent groups alike, have complicated the Nigeria's national security issues or security challenges. Moreover, these perturbing national issues and the regular trends of behaviour, actions and tactics deployed by the insurgent groups in orchestrating mayhem in the country, as well as the regime security approach to these security challenges over the years, have heightened the clamour by the Nigeria civil population for alternative means to protect their lives. This is one of the bases for the recent clamour for constitutional creation of regional, community and state policing networks leading to the question of whether decentralisation of policing and creation of community security outfits is a panacea to insecurity issues in the country.

### ***1. Statement of the Problem***

Ensuring general security is the main duty of government to the people. Any government, which fails to guarantee the safety of lives and property has failed. In Nigeria, internal security is the responsibility of the Nigerian Police which paradoxically has become part of the insecurity debate as extra-legal killings has come to define its activities (Edo and Sagay, 2012). The intelligence arm of the police, along with other security agencies such as the Department of the State Security Service (DSS), are charged with gathering intelligence with a view of thwarting acts that could be detrimental to the nation. Furthermore, after criminal acts have been carried out, the police ought to be able to fish out the culprits. Our experience have been that criminals who have committed some bastardly crimes are hardly ever caught. Intelligence gathering has failed. Crime prevention is abysmal. Also very distressing are reported cases of criminals who masquerade as herdsmen to perpetuate wanton acts of destruction of lives and property across the country. Benue, Kaduna, Kano, Plateau, Ebonyi, Ondo, Ekiti and states in the South-South including Delta state became victims of vicious attacks while working in their farms.

However, it has becomes imperative for the security personnel, especially men of the police force to work closely with all facet of the society to identify criminal elements, sources of financing of crimes such as terrorism, as well as prioritised their efforts to combating such individuals or groups perpetrating crimes, and find the most effective solutions to such menaces. Essentially also, security management is not the responsibility of security personnel alone, though, it is their constitutional responsibility, and it could be the joint responsibility of members of a community and security personnel to protect lives and properties in a civilised society. To achieve this requires the active partnership of the individuals, members of the community, traditional leaders, local governments, civil and business leaders, public and private agencies, churches, schools, among others, to safeguard this concern. Unfortunately, this is not the case in Nigeria in which insecurity is now in a comatose state following the inability of the government to completely combat these security challenges and adheres to the recent clamours for constitutional backing to the creation of regional security outfits in the country as evident in the Amotekun and Ebube Agu security outfits in the South-West and South-East Nigeria respectively (Abolade, 2021).

The fear of being attacked by these criminal elements after exposing them to the police and other security agencies of the state is also a problem. There is also the fear of security agencies not efficiently maintaining trust and secrecy of their source of information and their involvement in most of these cases. This has been complicated by alleged involvement of some powerful Nigerians and government officials in terrorist financing and the inability of the Central Government to institute probe committees to investigate these allegations levelled against such individuals in the country. All of these have bedevilled efficient policing in the country resulting to the clamour for the establishment and constitutional recognition of regional security outfits to complement government security networks to safeguard lives and properties of Nigerians who are now hunted by the emerging insecurity challenges occasioned by the activities of the Boko Haram Islamic sect, the self-styled Fulani herdsmen, bandits, kidnapers and armed robbers (Okereka et al., 2020; Edo and Ba-Ana-Itenebe, 2022; Agbefe, Ikenga and Otiite, 2023).

There is also the problem associated with the order of command in times of emergencies, low funding and inadequate equipment to fight crimes because of the size of the country. Nigerian government at all levels are increasingly finding it difficult to balance budgets, which frequently forces police

departments to be allocated dwindling resources in the face of the growing problems and in this rapidly changing environment where police have to cope with an epidemic insecurity problems, increased transnational terrorism, violence and other forms of crimes. As a consequence the police force keeps declining in size and sophistication. There is also the problem of the armed forces of the federation being ill-equipped to counter these insurgents and terrorist groups, leading to the death of thousands of military personnel, displacement and death of hundreds of thousands of Nigerians in the most affected states in Nigeria.

Consequence upon the insecurity situation in the country, trade and commerce suffer the most, and there has been tremendous decline in the country's foreign direct investment (FDI) over the years. The movement towards the actualisation of the establishment of regional security outfits will not only promote public safety but complements the central government security agencies efforts in the fight against the increasing security challenges in Nigeria's North East, North Central, and now in other parts of the country, unfortunately, its realisation has been bedevilled by government's uneasiness to adhere to the clamour from the general public. It is on this premise that this study considers a more propitiatory means of achieving sustainable national security through national integration and constitutional creation of regional security outfits or what is regarded by some scholars, analysts and security experts as community policing outfits, and tries to solve the freedom and security contradictions often associated with the Nigeria's political environment and security over the years through policy options.

## **2. Objectives of the Study**

The general objective of this study is to examine the efficacy of regional security outfits to complement the fight against the security challenges in Nigeria. While the specific objectives are to:

- i. Examine the fundamental causes of the security challenges in Nigeria,
- ii. Examine the consequences of the security challenges in Nigeria,
- iii. Examine the efficacy of regional security outfits in Nigeria, and
- iv. Suggest the best policy option that can effectively complement the efforts of government security agencies in the fight against security challenges in the country.

## **3. Research Questions**

The following research questions were raised to guide this study:

- i. What are the fundamental causes of the security challenges in Nigeria?
- ii. What are the consequences of the security challenges in Nigeria?
- iii. What are the efficacies of the proliferation of regional security outfits through constitutional means to combat security challenges in Nigeria?
- iv. What are the best policies options needed to complement security agencies efforts in the fight against the security challenges in Nigeria?

## **4. Research Method:**

The researcher adopted the historical research design. This research design is chosen because of its consistency in explaining the past and enables us to understand the future. The study relied extensively on secondary sources of data. Secondary data are research materials obtained from already existing literature. This means that secondary data are not originally from the researcher but from existing literature such as journals, articles, gazettes, correspondence, newspapers, books, and internet sources.

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## **II. Literature Review**

### **The Concept of Security and Insecurity**

A lot has been written and discussed about the concept of security in its classic sense. Global developments and experiences are beginning to alter the way people perceive security both as a concept and in a practical sense. Dictionaries and common usage distinguish the word "security" (etymologically from the Latin, without care) from the word "safety". The variation lies in security having the added emphasis on protection from dangers that originated from the outside- the sense of encroachment. Security, thus, does not only refer to militarism, policing and technologies of surveillance and governance but include human security which is food security and shelter. However, the concept of security is generally accepted as a contested concept, but it is, generally, about the condition or feeling safe from harm or danger, the defence, protection and preservation of core values, as well as the absence of threats to acquired values. It is about survival and the conditions of human existence. Its traditional conception emphasises threat and the use of force. Its military conception focused on the state as the primary referent object of security. This has been criticized by various scholars because it does not account for or explain the emerging non-military sources of threat to security at the individual, societal, state, regional and global levels (Best, 2007).

In spite of its divergence, the major focus of the concept remain the same, from protection of lives and properties, to safeguarding national prestige and ensuring stable economic growth and development of national infrastructures for the benefit of the citizenries. Williams (2008) described it, “as that which is commonly associated with the alleviation of threats to cherish values, especially those which, if left unchecked, threaten the survival of a particular referent object in the near future”. Although, the concepts “security and survival” are often related, but are not synonymous. Whereas the concept “survival” is undeniably an essential condition while security involves the ability to pursue cherished political and social ambitions. This is what Booth (2007) called “survival-plus” which implies having some freedom from life-determining threats, and therefore some life choices.

Achumba, Igbomereho and Akpor-Robaro (2013) described security as, “stability and continuity of livelihood (stable and steady income), predictability of daily life (knowing what to expect), protection from crime (feeling safe), and freedom from psychological harm (safety or protection from emotional stress) which results from the assurance or knowing that one is wanted, accepted, loved and protected in one’s community or neighbourhood and by people around”. The concept of citizens’ security which is the process of establishing, strengthening and protecting democratic civil order as well as elimination of all forms of threats in our society and allowing for safe and peaceful coexistence becomes the essential mechanism needed for providing security for all. Addressing citizens’ security means addressing citizens’ security challenges or causes of the insecurity situations of the country and in appropriate manners, and through efficient and creative programmes and security strategies that could redirect the lives of the citizens and build community trust on the government policies and the security agencies of the government (Creative Associates International, 2020).

Omoyibo and Akpomera (2013) described security in its entirety as a concept that is prior to the state, and the state exists in order to provide that concept. It therefore means that security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government or the state. Idowu (2014) sees security as that which encompasses phenomenon that is paramount to the individual citizens of a community, and the community itself or the nation. In a nut shell, he sees it to mean freedom from risk or danger or fear; safety, confidence and the ability of a nation to protect and defend itself; promote its cherished values and legitimate interest and enhance the well-being of its citizens. Pogoson (2013) as cited in Idowu (2014:66) argued that security, first, has to do with self-preservation which is the first law of existence. It has to do with self-preservation, stable and relatively predictable environment in which an individual pursues his goal or group of individuals pursue their objectives without disruption, harm and danger, and without fear of disturbances or injuries (Pogoson, 2013).

National security also known as internal security is not limited to securing the territorial boundary of a country alone, but also ensuring that citizens’ rights, including the right to life and better livelihood are guaranteed. It means that national security goes beyond physical security alone but also social security which is also the fundamental right of the citizens of the state. Nigerian citizens within Nigeria and those outside the shore of the country are to be protected by the government without compromising their fundamental human rights with flimsy excuses. On a general perspective, national security is the act of keeping peace within the territorial borders of a sovereign nation-state by upholding the laws of the nation-state, as well as defending against any form of internal security threat such as terrorism, insurgency, and which is the responsibility of the police and other security agencies, and in exceptional situations, the armed forces of the federation. Simply stated, internal security is the process of keeping peace and maintaining safety within the state. (Naankiel & Ayokhai, 2016).

Insecurity on the other hand is the opposite side of security. It has different meanings such as absence of safety, danger, hazard, uncertainty, lack of protection, and lack of safety. Beland (2005) described it as “a state of fear or anxiety due to absence or lack of protection. Yahaya (2021) also sees insecurity simply as lack of security. In an elaborate manner, he described insecurity as “a breach of security and peace whether it be caused by struggle for economic scarcity of resources, religious difference, politics, ethnicity or civil conflict that leads to the destruction of lives and properties. It means that insecurity is lack of protective assurance by citizens of their leaders or government as well as the fear that one can be attacked by enemies, thieves or intruder as a result of lack of security (Yahaya, 2021). The term security therefore means safety of lives and properties of citizens of a state by the government and its security agencies. Security in its entirety is not just protecting lives through the police force and other state security agencies but include ensuring that human as well as internal security are guaranteed by the state (government) and the citizens themselves. In security on the other hand is the opposite of security. It means lack of security. It is the contravention of peace and security.

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### III. Theoretical Framework

Amidst other theories, Expectancy theory propounded by Victor Vroom is adopted in this study to examine the efficacy of regional security outfits to provide security against the challenges that seem to have overwhelmed the federal government and its regular security agencies in recent years. One may argue that the establishment of regional security outfits or state policing outfits through constitutional means in Nigeria is overdue following the inability of the federal government to manage these security challenges alone and which has resulted to hundreds of thousands of displacement and death of Nigerian. The origin of Expectancy theory can be traced to the work of Victor H. Vroom, a Professor Emeritus of Management at Yale University in 1964. The theory talks about management and the drivers behind employee behaviour as it pertains to motivation. Vroom’s work focused on explaining the choices individuals make at work places concerning their capabilities, leadership, among other factors (Gaffney, 2018).

Brian and Shadi (2016) traced the origin of what they refer to as “the Expectancy theory of Motivation” to the work of Edward C. Tolman which was later popularised by Victor H. Vroom’s Expectancy theory in 1964. The theory argued that people are only motivated to do something because they think their actions will create the needed satisfaction they required. To this end, the theory provides that an individual’s motivation only comes from his believe from the form of reward he gets at the end of his services (Brian & Shadi, 2008).

The theory emphasises the reasons why an individual or group of individuals behave or act in a certain way or manners when confronted with some challenges such as the overwhelming security challenges in contemporary Nigerian society. In most cases, the individuals are motivated to select or adopt

a specific pattern of behaviour over the others because of what they expect from the environment or society in which they interact with. It is also about the mental processes regarding choice of action or that which explains the processes the individuals undergo to make choices in an establishment or society. When situated to an organisation, this theory explains the need for an organisation to relate rewards to performance and ensure that rewards provided are what are exactly what the people or employees desire (Oliver, 1974; Montana & Charnov, 2008).

The theory is conceived as the driving force behind all human efforts to achieve desire goal which is satisfaction. It occupy a very important place in any given environment or situation such as the case in Nigeria in which the citizens are consistently expecting the government of the country to comply with the outcries for regional security outfits to complement government efforts in the fight against terrorism and insurgencies of the Boko Haram, ISWAP, Fulani herdsmen militancy, bandits, among others. Since motivation is essential in any business organisation, it is equally necessary whether in a private or public enterprise or in any social organisation. By implication, the Central Government, State Governments, the Security Service Chiefs, security agencies and the civilian population are expected to synergise in order to achieve a unified goal which is to put an end to the rising rate of insecurity occasioned by the activities of Boko Haram and ISWAP terrorism, herders/farmers conflict, bandits, kidnappers, armed robbers, and other forms of security challenges in the country.

In addition, the government and the general public should not expect much to be done or achieved by the Security Service Chiefs and their agencies without their maximum inputs or collective efforts to the success of the security agencies in combating insecurity in the country. This is what expectancy theory connotes in this study. Since the citizens are clamouring for state police or regional security outfits through constitutional means to complement governments' efforts in the fight against insecurity in the country, the federal government is expected to act accordingly to ensure that the expectations of the citizens are met as expected. This theory has been adopted because it is obvious that one of the major challenges confronting the Nigerian Police from performing optimally in their role of internal security has been the issue of lack of proper welfare and motivation of personnel. When personnel of agencies are properly motivated in terms of remuneration, health care, and welfare generally, there is no doubt that they will put in their best to produce the finest possible result in their respective duty. If regional security outfits / community police are encouraged under the control of State governments, they will be well funded in terms of logistics and remuneration and in the end workers will be motivated to carry out their duties effectively. Efficient and proper application of expectancy theory depends on the capability of the leader in a workplace to understand expectancy as it is related to the extreme usefulness of the workplace.

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#### **IV. Data Presentation and Analysis**

##### **1. Fundamental Causes of the Security Challenges in Nigeria**

At the most proximate and indisputable level, terrorism and insurgency are the most fundamental causes of the insecurity in Nigeria in recent time (Edo & Ba-Ana- Itenebe, 2022). Other leading causes of insecurity in Nigeria include the increasing rate of crimes such as armed robbery, banditry, kidnappings for ransom, Fulani marauders, ritual killings, piracy in the Niger Delta region and along the Gulf of Guinea, and attacks from unknown gunmen in South-Eastern Nigeria. Ayodeji, Olutayo, Abimbola and Saheed (2018) argued that states like Nigeria and as it has always been before independence, insecurity remains a major challenge to the government and the citizens. Unlike what is obtained in the pre-independence era, insecurity has escalated partly because of the diverse nature of the country, the people and the problems of nation-building. With the end of the prolonged military intervention in politics in Nigeria, the exercise of freedom associated with civil rule; bottled-up problems and repression of the past years were freely given expression resulting in several crises and conflicts ranging from ethnic, economic, political to religion conflicts (Ayodeji et al, 2018).

The primary bases of terrorism in the country have always been associated with religious fanaticism and intolerance. Since 2009, Nigeria has lost hundreds of thousands of lives and properties because of the activities of Boko Haram, and now ISWAP terrorist organisations, banditry, and Fulani herdsmen attacks on towns and villages across the country. Lack of institutional capacity and breakdown of institutional structures have also been ascribed as some of the fundamental causes of insecurity in the country. Weak and shaky foundations of institutional frameworks have also provoked deterioration of governance and democratic accountability, as well paralysed existing formal and legitimate rules that define the hierarchy of social order. Poor governance has also been ascribed one of the driving forces behind the worsening insecurity in Nigeria, and which makes the country vulnerable to diverse security challenges (African Center for Strategic Studies, ACSS, 2015; Gbolahan, 2022).

Insecurity in Nigeria, although varies from region to region, such as economic-unemployment, poverty, rise of ethnic and militia groups, weak leadership, weak judiciary and ineffective security agencies, and religious extremism are also identified as causes of insecurity in the country (Obarisiagbon & Akintoye (2019). Gideon (2021) traced the insurgency of the Boko Haram to religious, socio-political and cultural factors. He argued "that except from the fact that Boko Haram terrorism originated from Islamic fanaticism, it is also driven by certain factors such as inequalities within the country, and lack among the populace in terms of means of livelihood (i.e. economic resources), and education and access to it, and good values or social needs" (Gideon, 2021). Olawale (2018) as cited in Ayodeji et al. (2018) argued "that the security challenges in Nigeria are often times internal as well as externally induced, but the internal ones such as armed robbery, sea piracy, kidnapping and hostage-taking, ethnic, and religious and electoral violence, and the Niger Delta crisis have been the most dominant security challenges in the country over the years".

Olawale (2018) opined that the other forms of internally induced security challenges in Nigeria are caused by the activities of armed robbers, and arms and human traffickers. The failure of the government to effectively police its borders has promoted these forms of crimes. On the other hand, are the externally induced security challenges, though limited in number, but a few of which are associated with threats from transnational terrorism such as the Boko Haram and ISWAP terrorism in Nigeria's North-East geopolitical zone believed to be affiliates of the Islamic States of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). The causes of these security challenges are more from systematic failures and corruption in government institutions than any other thing (Olawale, 2018).

Employment is also identified as one of the extreme causes of insecurity in the country, which in return inimical to socio-economic growth and development across the country. It is however obvious that unemployment causes extreme poverty which instigates or breeds adverse crimes and insecurity such as kidnapping, robbery, child abduction and other nefarious activities in an attempt to make ends meet (Ya'u Madobi, 2022).

Akinsowon (2021) sees Nigeria as a crime injected nation in which there are endless inhuman attitudes including gruesome murders, robberies by violence, rape, cultism, ritual killings, bribery and official corruption, obtaining goods and money by false pretence, kidnappings for ransom, child stealing, and religious and political violence associated with bomb blasts, and use of sophisticated weapons to destroy lives and properties. He categorised the causes of the security challenges confronting the Nigerian state into shortage of food, finance, transport, health care and personal security issues, and most importantly, other national security issues such as tribal and ethnic crises, and political assassinations. He argued that these security issues are compounded by hunger, high unemployment rate, infrastructural decadence and other vices too numerous to mention (Akinsowon, 2021:174). Edeh (2022) argued "that Nigeria is inarguably among the countries in the world that have provided safe haven to terrorist groups and criminal elements with the leading cause of this development attributed to poor or bad governance, systemic corruption, weak justice system, unemployment and poverty, porous borders, and ethnic and religious differences have always promoted the worsening security threats in Nigeria (Edeh, 2022).

Scholars like Olaniya and Yahaya (2016), Suleiman (2017) and Mustapha (2019) have also advanced several factors that promotes insecurity in Nigeria, especially; banditry that has encompasses all the states in the North-West geopolitical zone to include the fragility of Nigerian state, weak state institutions, especially security agencies, availability of grossly ungoverned spaces, porosity of Nigeria's borders with neighbouring states, arm proliferation, weak leadership, corruption, unemployment, and mass poverty. Chinecherem and Iregbenu (2015) opined that unemployment appears to be one of the factors that promote insecurity and which has becomes a serious challenge to the government of Nigeria in recent times. This has continually fanned the embers of insecurity in Nigeria's northeast and other regions of the country. When the youths are frustrated by their unemployed state, a number of them take to committing crimes of various degrees. Another fundamental cause of the security challenges in Nigeria is the lop-sided development of the country. As Nwadiolor (2011) puts it, the deliberate concentration of Nigeria's capital resources to the development of a few cities in the name of federal and state capitals, resulting in the prevalence of a large population of rural and underdeveloped communities who later came to see the developing cities as a different country has always compounded the security challenges in the country. The failure of the government to combat these challenges through dialogues and policy as well as military options is also a factor. The unabated activities of the insurgents and criminal groups have continued to threaten lives and properties of citizens and the unity of the country, yet, there is no evidence that these challenges will end soon.

## 2. Consequences of the Security Challenges in Nigeria

The undefeated insecurity situation in the country has become a part of the country and the end to it seems to have no end yet. The continued negative impact of insecurity in the country has heightened the fears that the country is heading towards a failed-state rather than a failing-state that it has been tagged by the international community, observers and scholars alike. Business environment and business flow into the country have been impacted negatively. Huge budgetary allocations to defence, security votes and money collected from excess crude account without legislative approval are yet to solve the problem of insecurity in the country. This scenario has bedevilled the country's socio-political and economic development amidst abundance of human and natural resources and huge military presence in the northeast and other geopolitical zones (Gideon, 2021).

The worsening insecurity has impacted negatively, not only on economic and infrastructure development, but also on the country's socio-political development. Foreign direct investment (FDI) is also in the decline following the changing patterns of the security challenges, namely Boko Haram, ISWAP, banditry, Fulani herdsmen attacks, armed robbery, kidnapping, among others. The sophistication adopted in the pursuit of the unaccepted behaviours of these non-state actors has complicated the porous security situation in Nigeria. In spite of government counter responses to these security challenges, they seem to be unabated, and in the increase on a daily basis, and in several parts of the country. In recent time, each of the geopolitical zones in the country are associated one form of security challenge and another, for example, the North-East geopolitical zone is associated with the insurgencies of the Boko Haram and ISWAP while the North-Central and North-West have the bandits and farmers-herders conflict respectively to contend with. Other geopolitical zones also have peculiar causes to contend with. In the South-East, there is the IPOB, now the ECN and unknown gunmen, among others.

As Udeh, Okoroafor and Ihezue (2020) put it: "for decades, Nigeria has been witnessing unprecedented security challenges occasioned by the actions of militant groups and kidnapers in the South-South geopolitical zone; IPOB and its armed group-the Eastern Security Network (ECN) and now, unknown gun men in the South-East; violet armed robbery in almost all parts of the country; political assassinations and ritual killings in the South-West; and more recently, the activities of Boko Haram, ISWAP, banditry and Fulani marauders in northern part of the country". These social menace put together have impinged on security of lives and properties of citizens. These have also triggered worrisome sense of insecurity that challenged government's efforts toward national socio-economic development. Beside this, foreign investors are deterred from investing in the country's economic sector (Udeh et al., 2020:93).

In the immediate past, several discourse traced the leading security challenges in Nigeria to those that emanated through regional, ethnic and youth radicalisation, prominent among which are the Odua Peoples' Congress (OPC) in the South West; the Arewa Peoples' Congress (APC) in the North; Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), the Ijaw Youth Congress (IYC), and Egbesu Boys in the Niger Delta; and Igbo Peoples' Congress (IPC), and the Bakassi Boys in the South East. Beside these, there are also those caused by the activities of the militant groups in the Niger Delta, namely the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) led by Henry Okah and coordinated by Jomo Gbomo, the Niger Delta Peoples' Volunteer Force (NDPVF) led by Alhaji Mujahid Asari Dokubo, Niger Delta Vigilante Force (NDTV) led by Ateke Tom, the Bush Boys, among

others. More recently was the Niger Delta Avengers (NDA) which appeared in March 2016, Boko Haram, Ansaru - a splinter group from Boko Haram since 2012, Kala-Kato and Ombalse group (Salawu, 2010:345; Onuoha, 2012:134; Duru, 2012:162; Afeno, 2014:48; Ewa, 2018:36).

In recent time are the threats associated with the activities of Islamic extremist groups such as the Boko Haram terrorist organisation and ISWAP, and other criminal groups such as the Fulani herders, bandits and kidnapers, and very recently the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic in the country which is a different form of human insecurity all together and has helped to further impoverish socio-economic developments in Nigeria. However, the consequences of worsening insecurity in Nigeria are so numerous and cover diverse areas of Nigeria's national security, including education and health care infrastructure, and economic growth and development. Achumba, Ighomereho and Akpan-Robaro (2013) as cited in Okonkwo, Ndbuisi and Anagbuogu (2015) argued that: the unprecedented level of the insecurity in Nigeria has not only threatened Nigeria's national security, but has also prompted huge allocation of the national budget to security, yet, the government has failed to provide a secured and safe environment for lives, properties and the conduct of business and economic activities. This has also increased crime rate and terrorists attacks in different parts of the country, leaving unacceptable consequences for the nation's economy and business growth.

Ndbuisi-Okolo and Anagbuogu (2019:7) argued "that the violent, chaos and disorderliness caused by the leading security challenges in Nigeria has hampered industrialisation and sustainable development in the country since their emergence". Olubukola (2013) associated the rising level of unemployment in Nigeria to the growing level of insecurity in the country, and which has calls for serious concern. He argued that most school leavers and employable youths are unable to secure jobs and the government is unable to act fast enough in finding lasting solution to this problem of insecurity. Unemployment inarguably causes social disquiet and is the harbinger of the spate of crimes, perennial youth unrest and unstable socio-economic structure that has bedevilled the country. Unemployment has not only driven many Nigerians into various activities that constitute threats to the national security, but is a continuum and has taken various dimensions. Unemployment thus appears one of the factors that have promoted insecurity in the country. It has becomes a serious challenge to the government in recent times, and has continually fanned the embers of insecurity, particularly in Nigeria's northeast, and by extension, in other regions of the country.

Similarly, like security of live and properties of citizens, businesses in Nigeria are increasingly facing threats imposed by the security challenges that have emanated in the country. The reality of these developments have heightened the already expanded economic and physical security problems in Nigeria. This has also impacted negatively in several areas of the Nigeria's economy, including employment generation and economic growth and development. This scenario also has grave consequences on the country's socio-economic development because no nation can achieve socio-economic development in an environment of socio- and physical insecurity.

### 3. The Efficacies of Regional Security Outfits in Providing Security in Nigeria

It can rightly been argued that the state exists to make and enforce laws that will benefit its citizens. Laws are also enacted not to regulate the conducts of government and the citizens alone, but for the well-being and security of all citizens. As Thaddeus (2020) rightly stated "the state enacts laws by virtue of the well-being of the individual citizens and in the pursuit of security and freedom from fear from internal and external threats. The only reason citizens obey the laws of the state is for the state (government) to deliver them from the Hobbesian state of nature by providing them the necessary security needed to express themselves as humans, thus, the social contract envisioned by Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Jean Jacque Rousseau and others" (Thaddeus, 2020:177). This cannot hold if the government of the state fails in its duties to provide the citizens the much required national security which is to protect lives and properties as well as defence from external aggressions.

Matfess (2016) argued that, "lack of oversight mechanisms at the state levels and corresponding political influence encouraged the proliferations of informal security outfits often endorsed by the states and local governments in Nigeria". Okewo (2014) as cited in Matfess (2016, p.17) stated that over 26,000 youths joined the Civilian Joint Task Force (C-JTF) in Borno State, trained and empowered financially by the governor of the state, Kashim Shettima in response to Boko Haram insurgency in the North-East geopolitical zone. Similarly, Hunan Rights Watch (2002) stated that these vigilante groups when they are not outright political militias, they emerged from a mixture of political patronage and legitimate security gap created by the central government as is the case in Nigeria. The defunct Bakassi Boys in the South-East Nigeria is a good example of vigilante groups that emerged because of security gap created by the constitutional centralisation of security at the federal level of government (Hunan Rights Watch, 2002).

It has always been the constitutional mandate of the Federal government to provide defence and security to the citizens. In the light of this responsibility, the first goal of the Nigerian state is the security mandate to provide peaceful environment conducive enough for the state to strive in its socio-economic activities, as well as security to lives and assets. Matfess (2016) opined that there are three aspects of the 1999 Nigerian constitution that stand out as problematic, notably the centralisation of the police force with very limited sub-national oversight functions, ambiguous concept of indigeneity, and the overlapping and contradicting tenure systems endorsement. The lopsided federalism and the security gap it created led to the creation of vigilantism, violent anti-state revolts, ethnic self-defence militias and political thugs (Matfess, 2016).

The constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria clearly defines the structures of the security management in the country to include the law enforcement and defence military forces, namely military forces (Army, Navy and Air force, State Security Services (SSS), Police, Defence Intelligence Service (DIS), National Intelligence Agency (NIA) and Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), and Nigerian Prisons Services (NPS)". Furthermore they stated that security services in Nigeria have been extended to state-actors or non-governmental organisations (NGOs), community based organisations (CBOs) and community vigilantes, Neighbourhood watch groups (NWGs), and private security outfits and premise guards (Ufot & Peter, 2014:15). The widening scope of insecurity in Nigeria, perhaps, has also widened security management in the country to include non-state actors, individuals, and international social justice and civil rights movements, and now regional based security outfits as is the case of Amotekun and Ebube-Agu in Southwest and Southeast geopolitical zones of the country. Nwoko (2021) contends that the breach of the social contract between the people and the government of

Nigeria that worsened insecurity in the country, and perhaps this incapacity of the government both at the central and state levels to protect lives and properties of citizens was the reason for the creation of ethnic and regional self-help initiatives, as in the case of Amotekun and Egube-Agu security outfits.

The failure of the Federal Government of Nigeria to successfully combat the worsening insecurity that has caused grievous damages questions the provisions of the 1999 Constitution (as amended) which provides for the Nigerian state the exclusive right to protect lives and properties. Charter VI, Part III, Sections 214, Sub Section (1) provides for the establishment of the Nigerian Police Force (NPF). It states that there shall be a police for Nigeria which shall be known as the Nigeria Police Force, and subject to the provisions of this section, no other Police Force shall be established for the Federation or any part thereof (Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999). Section 217 (1) states that there shall be an Army, Navy, an Airforce and such other branches of the armed forces of the Federation as may be established by an Act of the National Assembly.

Section 14 of the same Nigerian Constitution states “that the security of live and property of citizens shall be the primary responsibility of every state government (Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999). By implication, the governors of the states in the country being the heads of their states and the chief security officers have the rights to take measures that can keep their citizens safe, yet, the legality of the creation of regional security outfits, Amotekun and Ebube-Agu by the governors of the Southwest and Southeast respectively were questioned by some sections of the Nigerian public, including Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of a Nigeria (MACBAN), partisan advocacy group that champion and promote the welfare of Fulani pastoralists in Nigeria (Johson, Akinyemi & Agwan, 2020; Nwoko, 2021).

Nkire (2017) stated that because state powers in Nigeria have for a long time maintained by the central government rather than being shared appropriately among the levels of government, there is the conception for true-federalism which seems to have eluded the country, and this has always been the reason why political actors and the citizens alike, have in recent time agitated for devolution of powers and restructuring of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended). Babalola and Onapajo (2019) argued that since Nigeria gained her independence in 1960, its federal system has been imperfect and problematic. Okereka, Orhero and Oluka (2022) assert that the Nigeria self-styled federal system of government since independence has been associated with several forms of security challenges leading to persistent agitations for restructuring of the country’s federal system, as well as devolution of powers and restructuring of the security system in the country.

The Nigerian state possesses all the attributes of a great nation, such as population, natural and human resources, financial muscle and military capabilities to combat insurgencies, terrorism and other forms of crimes in the country. Nigeria also possesses all the attributes of a regional leader in Africa, and alongside the super powers. Unfortunately, Nigeria is faced with several forms of internal security challenges that have threatened its political unity. As Alli (2012) stated Nigeria’s approach to sub regional security has been commendable, especially in its leading role in ECOWAS Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) in Sierra Leone from 1997 to 2000, Guinea Bissau in 1999, Cote d’Ivoire in 2002, the military seizure of power in Niger Republic in 2010, and the military coup d’état in Mali and in Guinea Bissau in 2012, among several other security challenges in Africa. With Nigeria’s role in Africa, it is expected that the government should be able to adequately manage the emerging internal security challenges of the Boko Haram, ISWAP, banditry and Fulani herdsmen attacks on local farmers that have severely threatened lives and properties in Nigeria.

On the contrary, the conventional security agencies have not done enough to contain the activities of these insurgents, terrorists and criminal groups resulting in the recent call for restructuring debates, and constitutional backing for state policing and regional security outfits such as the “Amotekun and Ebube-Agu” security outfits in the Southwest and Southeast geopolitical zones respectively. As Nte and Oluka (2020) stated “the forceful occupation and seizure of some of the communities in the North East by Boko Haram and the sporadic onslaught on some communities in the North-Central geopolitical zones, particularly in Benue, Plateau and Taraba states, and now in Southern part of the country under the guise of Fulani herdsmen and farmers conflict, have certainly defied the capacity and competence of the conventional security apparatuses of the state resulting to the continuous clamour for proliferation of regional security networks. There is however the question as to what could be done to combat these perennial security challenges in Nigeria.

In affirmative, Thaddeus (2020) argued that the subsistence of the Boko Haram and ISWAP terrorists in the North-East, and armed banditry and kidnappings for ransom and Fulani-farmer conflict in the North-Central and the Middle Belt which has spilled over to the Southern part of Nigeria, have exposed the incompetence and unpreparedness of the present administration of President Buhari and the state security agencies to effectively contained the activities of these insurgents and criminal groups in the country. The attacks of the Fulani herdsmen in farms and villages in Nigeria has placed the country in a situation where it has to choose between holding on to the centralised security arrangement while the insurgency and terrorism of the Boko Haram, banditry, Fulani herdsmen, unknown gunmen, among others, dominated the security scene destroying properties, killing and maiming innocent citizens all over the country (Thaddeus, 2020).

It is a consensus that the security challenges which ranges from the activities of Boko Haram terrorist groups and banditry to the clashes between Fulani herdsmen and farmers and to the ritual murders in the country have overwhelmed the government and the security agencies. The creation of Operation Amotekun by the South-West states governors and Operation Ebube-Agu by the South-east States governors is an attestation of the inability of the current security system to ameliorate these mayhems. Oluwale (2020) argued that the collaboration tagged operation Amotekun is expected to complement the efforts of the regular police force in the area of combating kidnappings, armed robbery, and herdsmen and farmers contentions all over the country.

The creation of Amotekun and Ebube-Agu have attracted criticisms from some sections of the country. The federal government has in several instances question the legality of the operations of the Amotekun and Ebube-Agu security outfits which have no constitutional backings before they were created. Whether they have constitutional backings or not, the successes recorded in combating the activities of Fulani marauders and other forms of crimes in the local communities justify the need for the National Assembly to provide constitutional backing for regional security outfits to complement the efforts of the regular security system in the fight against insurgencies, terrorism and other forms of crimes in the country. In other words, the efficacy of regional



security outfits and state police cannot be push outside in the face of the increasing security challenges in the country with states and geopolitical zones experiencing one form of security challenges and another.

## V. Conclusion

In conclusion, internal security constrains have aggravated the sufferings of Nigerians, make the poor even more vulnerable, distort economic values, rob national budgets, discourage foreign investments, promote capital flights, perpetuate human suffering, result is loss of lives and property and general sense of insecurity in the country. Given the related neglect of internal insecurity by strategic analysts, little or nothing has been done in Nigeria by way of evolving any meaningful doctrine of internal security. The result is that several years after independence, Nigeria still lacks well-articulated internal security policy. This, probably made Nigerians to be taken unaware by Boko Haran sect that has been terrorizing Nigerian citizens in the Northeast region for some time now; kidnapers who have made lives difficult for an average Nigeria; armed robbers who have reduced the lives of Nigerian citizens to a mere vegetable existence; hired assassins who have made everybody to live in perpetual fear; ritual Killings, and internal fraudsters who have wrecked families bankrupt in Nigeria. Added to this, is the menace of unknown “gunmen” and terrorist “herdsmen” who have made farming difficult for our local peasant farmers in the face of the nation’s current food crisis.

The present insecurity in Nigeria and the clamour for self-help through the establishment of regional security outfits by the governors of the states in the Southwest and Southeast geopolitical zones of the country no doubt is as a result of the failure of the federal government and its security agencies to meet up to the expectations of the citizens. This is not the first time Nigerians attempted to provide security for themselves because of the incompetence of the security agencies, especially the police. Though the past attempts to provide self-security was limited to ethnic and community based vigilante groups but these groups such the Bakassi Boys in Southeast, Egbesu Boys in Ijaw land, Odua’s People’s Congress (OPC) in Yoruba land, and the Hisbah and Civilian Joint Task Force (C-JTF) in the North to great extent recorded commendable successes in the area of crime control until they became politicised and used in intimidating opposition members in the communities. The Southwest and South east Governments have taken responsibility through the deployment of regional security outfits to support government efforts in the fight against crimes in their domain. Perhaps, it was these successes in the past that helped to cultivate the recent regional security initiatives in the form of Amotekun and Ebube-Agu, and existing community vigilante groups to complement government’s efforts in the fight against insurgencies, terrorism, and other forms of crimes.

## VI. Recommendations

The following recommendations are made following the findings of this study:

- i. The anxiety or fear over the creation of Amotekun and Ebube-Agu security outfits and the plans by the governors of other geopolitical zones to also jointly establish similar security outfits in their geopolitical zones can possibly be resolve by the federal government as the chief security infrastructure in Nigeria. This can only be done by the federal government through the provision of constitutional backing, making laws and coordinating the activities of regional security outfits. It means that the federal, states and local governments must work together to provide the needed security to the citizens.
- ii. The federal government through its centralised security system, especially the police and the army should provide training to the regional security outfits especially in the safe use of firearms, and constitutional best practices in the fight against insurgencies and other crimes that have impeded the growth of socio-economic activities in the country as long as they are operating within the ambits of the law.
- iii. State government should provide adequate funds to the regional security outfits to enable them perform optimally and to the admiration of the government and the citizens of the states.
- iv. The President and his team should make affirmative pronouncements especially in respect of the upsurge of the Fulani Herdsmen and take concrete actions to install confidence to the people. From the foregoing, the use of state or community policing as an antidote to crime prevention in Nigeria is not-negotiable.

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