

NON STATE SECURITY ACTORS IN NIGERIA: RATIONALE, PROSPECT AND CHALLENGES OF "OPERATION AMOTEKUN" IN SOUTHWEST NIGERIA

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Abstract

The need to safeguard the Nigerian state by plethora of security actors, both the state and non-state, turns out to be more compelling in Nigeria's social order as evident in various criminal activities ranging from Boko Haram insurgency, abduction, armed banditry, herders/farmers conflict, and money rituals. The prevalence of insecurity spurs the agitation of Southwest Nigeria's governors to institutionalize a local security agency code named "Operation Amotekun" to safeguard the populace of the Southwest Nigeria which comprises Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, Ondo, Ekiti. Adopting regionalism as theoretical framework of analysis and using primary and secondary data, the paper examines the rationale, prospect and challenges of the "Operation Amotekun" in the Southwest Nigeria. The study concludes that "Operation Amotekun" possesses the potential to play viable role in safeguarding lives and properties of Nigerians in The southwest geo political zone. The piece therefore, recommends an uncompromising synergy between the Operation Amotekun and Nigeria Police Force in ensuring safety of lives and properties.

Keywords: Security, Actors, Operation Amotekun, Regionalism, Non-State.

Introduction

Security of lives and properties is originally a selective duty that falls in the capacity of government; cutting-across all layers of society (Iloh and Nwokedi, 2019). Nigeria has seen an extraordinary acceleration of violent clashes and various forms of criminalities since its return democratic rule in May 1999 (Irene 2016). The Nigerian government's dependence on formal security actors in handling with these security challenges has been rendered insufficient, thereby prompting the deployment of the military in supplementing the efforts of other security agencies. The military and other security operatives have had issues adapting, and effectively handling the difficult security condition. The powerlessness of formal state security actors to sufficiently protect lives and properties, and effectively maintain public sanity is a precursor for the emergence and multiplicity of non-state security actors in Nigeria (Adigwe 2013).

The frequent occurrence of social violations, such as banditry, theft, kidnapping among other vicious acts, required the revitalization of non-formal ways to deal with the security of

lives and properties (Hazen and Honar, 2007). Arrangements among group of people within a community were observable as a casual reaction to crimes, for example, robbery, and home-breaking cases (Irene, 2016). The persistent violations of human security likewise spurred the emergence of community security initiatives, as an idea, which though evident, has not so much enjoyed scholarly debates (Odevale and Lamidi 2020). In addition, criminalities in various forms and networks instigates the current discussion on grassroot-network policing across states in Nigeria with some brisk development, for example, Hisbah police in the Northern Nigeria. All the more particularly, the police-network advisory group is a standing unit for communications and tasks of common security issues (Ifeoma, 2020).

In Southwest Nigeria, most pronounced non-formal security networks are the vigilante groups of Oodua Peoples' Congress (OPC). Despite these outfits, high predominance of hijacking along interstates, farmland attack by herders, armed robbery in Southwest Nigeria called for Western Nigeria Security Network (WNSN) code-named Amotekun (Akinwunmi, 2020). The "Amotekun" signifies leopard in the Yoruba language, and is an operational terminology for the WNSN launched on Thursday 9th, January 2020. The leopard represents quality, persistence, aspiration, freedom, sturdiness, industriousness, understanding and mental fortitude. Amotekun/Leopard is in like manner known for its amazing pursuing behaviour and its camouflaging ability that enables it to protect its domain from interlopers. WNSN as a regional security framework is purposed to combat crimes in the area which involves Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, Osun, Ondo, and Ekiti states (*ibid*). The outfit would work to complement the state security operatives, for instance, Nigeria Police Force (NPF), NSCDC, among other state security establishments (Odevale and Lamidi, 2020).

At the beginning, the Southwest security network has attracted diverse appraisals; some commend while others disapprove it. The Northern Youth Council of Nigeria (NYCN) feared and criticised the informal security initiative as militant group of Oodua Peoples Congress (OPC) (The Eagle Online, 2020). The Attorney General of the Federation (AGF) and the Minister of Justice, Abubakar Malami announced the outfit as unlawful on the ground that the police is the constitutionally authorized agents to protect and secure lives and properties. Southwest prominent, Chief Afe Babalola (SAN) and Femi Falana (SAN) had in like manner condemned the declaration of the AGF as ultra-vires, that is the AGF doesn't have the legal provision to label the initiative unconstitutional (Daily Trust, 2020). Some similarly criticised that the Southwest regional security network is an attempt to create State Police since the Federal Government is reluctant to accede to the demand for such. Herdersmen in the region thinks the "Operation Amotekun" is a reprisal formation against them in the region (Vanguard, 2020). The Federal Government in like manner fears that the creation of Amotekun, would likely lay a perspective for various zones to participate in such action, and honestly or by suggestion threaten the solidarity of the Nigeria state. Despite these mixed slants, this paper uncover the rationale for creating "Operation Amotekun", with the ultimate objective of giving information on the possibilities and challenges of providing quality regional security services to communities in the Southwest Nigeria (Vanguard, 2020).

Theoretical Framework

Regionalism is at the focal point of examining the objectives of regional security networks in Nigeria. Regionalism is multidimensional and would require conceptual explanation

to better situate the theory around the regionalization of non-state security outfits in Nigeria. The idea of regionalism has pulled in gigantic consideration of the scholars and analysts in contemporary politics and international relations. This stems from the enduring quest that regionalism is coterminous for harmony, security and advancement through investigation, recognizable proof and continuous heightening of trade, economic, financial and social ties among the geographically contiguous regions. Regionalism has acquired noticeable ground in the 21st century, not just as a type of financial, political and social association, also as a field of study.

Regionalism is a belief system and political development that advance the yearnings of a group of people similar in many ways. It is vital, at the very beginning, to recognize two implications of the term, regionalism. At the global level, regionalism alludes to transnational participation to accomplish a shared objective or resolve a shared issue or it alludes to a group of countries, for example, Western Europe, the Western Balkans, or Southeast Asia, that are connected by geography, history or in economic and monetary ties. Utilized in this sense, regionalism alludes to endeavours to strengthen the connections between these nations. Today, the first illustration of such an endeavour is the European Union (EU) (Bevir, 2009).

The second significance of the term is regionalism alludes to an interaction where sub-state players/actors become progressively powerful, autonomous and free of the state. In this instance, power devolves from the central to state to local governments within a country. As such, it refers to a domain that is situated inside a nation-state. In this sense, various types of regions might be recognized: political areas, which as a rule have some type of regional government; administrative areas, which are topographical elements made to regulate different sectors, for example, health, electricity and energy generation; security (Loughlin, 2007:939).

Operation Amotekun is a regional security outfit which the Southwest geopolitical leaders of Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, Ondo, Ekiti have decided to collectively create for better security. Though Operation Amotekun is a regional issue, each state is designed to operate in units. The local government organ would be charged to coordinate the activities in its localities. Each local government will report issues and progress to the state command. The six-state commands will then connect the regional command in that order. The operation of the regional command will be coordinated from the central in Ibadan, Oyo state. The operational base is domiciled in Gbogun, Osun state, and in close collaboration with the Developmental Agenda for Western Nigeria (DAWN) Commission, as it provides administrative supervision for the initiative. Commissioner of police in each state is determined to oversee security activities in each of the states. Security trust fund would be in place to foot the bill of this agency, under the supervision of the Commissioner of police. Each state in the region is expected to recruit the number of personnel in accordance with their capacity.

The necessity of policing by all actors, both the state and non-state actors becomes even more evident in Nigeria. Diverse societies in the country is characterized by its daily headlines of insecurities and vices i.e Boko-haram insurgency, kidnapping, armed robbery, herdsmen/farmer clash, ritual killing, etc. Ikuteyijo (2008) also attests to the fact police in the different parts of Nigeria have been found wanting in the responsibility of securing lives and properties, especially in regard to combating criminality, hence the underlying reason for the agitations of the Southwestern Nigerian leaders for Operation Amotekun. The idea that security is more of

an indigenous phenomenon, and that criminality is strange to Yoruba citizens informed the effort to create an indigenous security network in the southwest region of Nigeria

Rationale for Western Nigeria Security Network: “Operation Amotekun”

There was relative harmony over the six states in the Southwest. Individuals could go from one state to another without the worry of human security jeopardy. A few travellers who appreciate night journey didn't have any motivation to be apprehensive, aside from periodic armed robbery on the interstates. In any case, a period came when the rest of mind for interstate transit was broken (Akinwunmi, 2020). Dread grasped numerous individuals over travelling from state to state. It began with ceaseless conflicts between nearby farmers and herders, and disturbed by armed robbery during the day, banditry and different types of social vices. By mid-2019, the danger had reached an agonizing stage for the Yoruba group, which impelled the six governors in the Southwest to meet in Abuja and chose Ondo State governor, Rotimi Akeredolu as their chairman. After the gathering, they ordered the Development Agenda for Western Nigeria (DAWN) Commission to assemble a security highest point, which was held in 2019. The conference was held at the Theophilus Ogunlesi Hall, University College Hospital (UCH), Ibadan, Oyo State (Ifeoma, 2020).

The security ceremony was attended by the Inspector General of Police, Mohammed Adamu, for southwest geo-political zone. Practical arrangements were reached toward the addressing different security addressing issues. The convergence of Southwest governors to establish a non-state security actor like “Operation Amotekun” culminates from the perception that it would be the panacea to the problem of insecurity (Premium Times, 2020). The DAWN Commission was charged to work out the chance and functionality of the security outfit (The Guardian, 2020). The commission was said to have worked perseveringly with the help of the Southwest state governors and concocted what is presently known as Western Nigeria Security Network (WNSN), codenamed 'Operation Amotekun'.

Amotekun is Yoruba name for leopard. “Operation Amotekun” was officially launched by the governing heads of Southwestern states on Thursday, January 9, 2020, flagging the beginning of new period in the security formation of the six states in the Southwest area of Nigeria (Odewale and Lamidi, 2020). The inauguration occurred at the Car Park of Oyo State Governor's Office, Agodi, Ibadan. Effectively, a portion of other geo-political zones in Nigeria have shown the aim to shape joint security outfits like Amotekun to battle insecurity in the Southwest region (The Guardian, 2020). The avalanche cases of insecurity serve as the compelling factor for creating “Operation Amotekun” to curb and eradicate armed banditry and cases of armed robbery in numerous states in the Southwest, particularly on Ibadan-Ilesha-Akure Road, Ondo-Ore Road, Ilesha-Ekiti Road, Akure-Ekiti Road that even elites who enjoy special security convoy dread to walk most particularly from 2018 to 2019. Lagos State additionally has its on portion of the threat on Epe, Ikorodu and Badagry expressway. Farmer-herders violent clash in the neighbourhood likewise informed piece of the causative variables for the urgency of creating "Operation Amotekun" (*Ibid*).

Those that have been survivors of capturing purportedly by herders are previous Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF), Chief Olu Falae, who was abducted in his farm in Ondo State; an Ibadan-based legal advisor, Mr Musibau Adetunmbi, who was kidnapped at Iwaraja in Osun State along Ilesha-Akure Road in April 2019; Prof of Orthopedic

Surgery and Traumatology at the Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), Ile-Ife, Osun State, Prof Adeyinka Adegbehingbe, who was grabbed among Asejire and Ikire towns while venturing out from Lagos to Ile-Ife in May 2019; just as Adedayo Adewole, son of an ex-Minister of Health, Prof Isaac Adewole (Sahara Reporters, 2020). As affirmed, different undisclosed sums were paid as ransom before a large number of the hostages were freed. Be that as it may, a few hostages were unfortunate; they were killed by their abductors. One of the conspicuous Nigerians that lost her life to the security malady was Mrs Funke Olakunrun, daughter of Pa Reuben Fazoranti, pioneer of Afenifere, a Yoruba socio-cultural and political association, which happened along Ondo and Ore road (*ibid*).

After the official unveils of Operation Amotekun, Southwestern Governors and Deputies were offered keys to drive one of the vans from different states, as flag off for the use of the vehicles. Every one of the vehicles has been painted red and every one of them marked with a logo that has a leopard on it (Ripples Nigeria, 2020). The vans, notwithstanding, have been moved to the various states in the Southwest geopolitical zone for initiation of security activities. Few people and sections of the country have been worried about how the faculty of the WNSN would work with the police, modalities for enlistment, how to forestall exuberance, feasible subsidizing for the outfit by the six states, if the staff would be authorised to arrest, if the security outfit isn't intended to destabilize the nation and set up the Yoruba country for severance from Nigeria, etc (*ibid*). However, the inquiries were completely replied at the official conference of the security activity, which was attended by Governors: Seyi Makinde of Oyo State; Kayode Fayemi of Ekiti State; and Rotimi Akeredolu of Ondo State, who graced the occasion, while Governors Gboyega Oyetola of Osun State and Dapo Abiodun of Ogun State were represented by their deputies: Gboyega Alabi and Noimot Salako-Oyedele, respectively. Bad weather was said to have forestalled the Lagos State Governor, Babajide Sanwo-Olu, from going to the ceremony (The Guardian, 2020).

The Ooni of Ife, Oba Enitan Ogunwusi, Ojaja II; Alawe of Ilawe Ekiti and Chairman of Council of Traditional Rulers in Ekiti State, Oba Adebajji Alabi; an unmistakable Yoruba pioneer and insightful history specialist, Prof Banji Akintoye; Minister of Youth and Sports, Mr. Sunday Dare; and Otunba Kayode Balogun, who spoke to the Aare Ona Kakanfo of Yorubaland, likewise graced the event. All the leaders of southwest political and traditional institutions that spoke at the occasion opined that Operation Amotekun was started to reinforce security architecture of Southwest against banditry, robbery, theft, ritualist, kidnapping and other social problems in the region (Premium Times, 2020).

They were all insistent that Operation Amotekun in the Southwest was not to cause disunity in Nigeria or for Youbaland to secede from the country, nor is the activity an attack on the Nigerian Constitution as the security system would assume integral role for the military in the nation. Operation Amotekun was intended to provide safety for indigenes and foreigners, living within the limits of different Southwestern states in carrying out their lawful exercises without fear of violent disruption (Ifeoma, 2020). The security of lives and property are regarded as principal significance. At the point when the improvement possibilities of Southwest states are examined, it is concluded that no meaningful development can evolve in a condition of insecurity. The Yoruba leaders state that regional non-state security arrangement ought to be seen and is found in one light alone: to battle a shared enemies. That adversary isn't Nigeria; the foes are the criminals within the Niegria polity particularly Southwest region

and their partners who are resolved to cause disturbance across the borders of Southwestern states by undermining the region's peace and socio-economic development (*Ibid*).

Southwestern states in Nigeria contribute 20 vehicles each except for Oyo State which gave 33 vehicles to the security outfit, including several cruisers given to infiltrate territories that vehicles can't get into, particularly hinterlands (Daily Trust, 2020). All personnel that would work in the security outfit would be enlisted and their biometrics would be taken so everyone of them can be properly and legitimately recognised. It is asserted that subsidizing would not be an issue as the six states in the locale "are focused on the accomplishment of the "Operation Amotekun". The Amotekun operation will be state-by-state. Osun Amotekun agents won't proceed to work in Oyo Amotekun space. Nonetheless, sharing information is a collective effort. There might be circumstances that would warrant a handshake between either of the Amotekun arrangements (Vanguard, 2020).

Methodology

The study adopts a descriptive research design. The population consists of member of the non-state security operatives in Nigeria i.e Vigilante Group of Nigeria, Civilian Joint Task Force, Neighbourhood Watch, Operation Amotekun etc. A sample of one hundred (100) respondents for the study comprises member of the "Operation Amotekun" in Lagos, Ogun, Oyo and Ondo, Ekiti States. Twenty respondents in the informal security outfits were randomly selected from each state. Quantitative and qualitative methods of analysis are employed for the study. Quantitative study deals with distribution of questionnaires to elicit information and analysis of data. The responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency distribution, percentages and content analysis. Qualitative method relies on the information gathered from secondary sources such as books, newspaper articles, journals publications, textbooks, monographs etc.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1: Prospect of "Operation Amotekun" in Southwest Nigeria

Prospect of Operation Amotekun	Agree	Strongly Agree	Indiff.	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	%	%	%	%	%
Political Support for Amotekun Security Network	35	57	4	2	2
Complimentary Role with Formal Security Agencies	32	64	2	1	1
Effective Grassroots Policing	37	54	2	3	4
Enhancing Police-Community Relations	28	68	2	2	0
Encourage Community Participation in Security	36	58	0	4	2

The table 1 above shows the respondents view on the prospect of the “Operation Amotekun” for alleviating the insecurity fears of Nigerians in the Southwest region. The majority, 35% and 57% respondents agree and strongly agree that the prospect of “Operation Amotekun” rests on the political support it has been able to secure among political leaders especially in the Southwest region. 4% of the respondents are indifferent about the political support, another 4% of the respondents disagree and strongly disagree on the political support for “Operation Amotekun” in the Southwest. On the prospect of playing complimentary role with the formal security agencies, 32% and 64% agree and strongly agreed, 2% are indifferent while 2 respondents disagree and strongly disagree. Respondents representing 37% and 54% agree and strongly agree that "Operation Amotekun" will foster effective grassroots policing. 2% of the respondents are indifferent about the capacity of the regional security agency to foster grassroot policing. 3% and 4% of the respondents disagree and strongly disagree. The respondents also view “Operation Amotekun” as important for police-community relations as 28% and 68% of the respondents agree and strongly agree, 2% respondents are indifferent, 2% and 0% of the respondents disagree and strongly disagree. “Operation Amotekun” to encouraging community participation has been favoured by 36% and 58% of the respondents who agree and strongly agree, while 0 respondents is indifferent, 4% and 2% of the respondents disagree and strongly disagree.

Table 2: Challenges of Successful "Operation Amotekun" in Southwest Nigeria

Challenges of “Operation Amotekun”	Agree	Strongly Agree	Indiff.	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	%	%	%	%	%
Autonomy and Formal – Informal Clash	33	61	5	1	0
Challenge of adequate training	35	63	1	0	1
Fear of Dismemberment	40	55	3	1	1
Vulnerable to be Tool for Personal Discord	28	68	2	2	0
The lack of prosecutorial power	37	58	1	1	3

The table 2 above shows the respondents view on the challenges the “Operation Amotekun” face in the process of alleviating the fears of Nigerians in the Southwest region. The majority comprising 33% and 61% respondents agree and strongly agree that autonomy and conflict between formal and informal security agencies will be a challenge for the “Operation Amotekun” in the Southwest region. 5% of the respondents are indifferent about the autonomy and possible clash while 1% of the respondents disagree and 0% strongly disagrees. On the recruits getting adequate training, 35% and 63% agree and strongly agreed, 1% of the respondent is indifferent while 0% respondents disagree and 1% strongly disagrees. Respondents representing 40% and 55% agree and strongly agree that the fear of dismemberment of Nigeria will hamper the activities of Operation Amotekun. 3% of the

respondents are indifferent. 1% and 1% of the respondents disagree and strongly disagree. That “Operation Amotekun” will be vulnerable to be used as tool for settling personal discord is also evident in 28% and 68% of the respondents who agree and strongly agree, 2% respondents is indifferent, 2% and 0% of the respondents disagree and strongly disagree. The lack of capacity to prosecute criminals have also been identified as a possible challenge to “Operation Amotekun” as 37% agree, 58% strongly agree, 1% indifferent, 1% and 3% disagree and strongly disagree.

Discussion of Findings

Prospect of “Operation Amotekun” in Southwest Nigeria

(a) Political Support for Amotekun Security Network

The majority comprises 35% and 57% respondents who agree and strongly agree that the prospect of “Operation Amotekun” rests on the political support it has been able to secure among political leaders especially in the Southwest region. 4% of the respondents are indifferent about the political support while 4% of the respondents disagree and strongly disagree on the political support for “Operation Amotekun” in the Southwest. The rate of crime - grabbing, house attacks, and theft, kidnapping, armed robbery etc. in Southwest Nigeria (Yorubaland) is alarming. On January 9, the Governors of the six states in the Southwest declared the foundation of “Operation Amotekun” (“Leopard” in the English language). The evident objective of Operation Amotekun is to help and supplement the public police administration, not to supplant it. While Abubakar Malami, the Attorney General, proclaimed the regional security agency illegal and ultra vires, the Vice President Yemi Osinbajo has since shown support for Operation Amotekun at the time President Muhammadu Buhari was out of the nation at that point. Yoruba customary rulers, driven by the Ooni of Ife, voiced their backings for the non-state security initiative (Daily Trust, 2020).

(b) Complimentary Role with Formal Security Agencies

On the prospect of playing complimentary role with the formal security agencies, 32% and 64% agree and strongly agreed 2% indifference while 2% respondents disagree and strongly disagree. The frontiers of the security outfit expressed that it was intended to help, as opposed to sabotage government security administrations. Security and wellbeing of our kin is opined as essential enthusiasm that informs the “Operation Amotekun”. Contrasted with “Neighborhood Watch,” “Operation Amotekun” and its organization is established to share data and intelligence with the police, which additionally incorporated an early-cautioning framework (Odewale and Lamidi, 2020). In spite of the fact that the security network is condemned for its uniforms and customised vehicles, which creates the perception of a defence force, it is obvious that “Operation Amotekun” receives the support of the Southwest governors. Governors of the Southwest region of Nigeria have vowed to gracefully finance its operation from the state treasury (*Ibid*).

In Nigeria's security architecture, the security outfit that appear nearer to the individuals and communities is the police force as there is no state police force. Since the colonial era, there has been worry that neighborhood policing could bring about ethnic disharmony. In principle, if not practically speaking, public cops are deployed outside the locality from which they come. Be that as it may, with the overall breakdown of security all through the nation, there is an exuberant discussion over the benefits of building up a type of

community policing (Campbell, 2020). This is essential for a bigger discussion on the devolution of more capacity to state and grassroots governments. There is additional acknowledgment that the public police are undertrained, underfunded, and excessively few in numbers. Subsequently, The activity would likewise fill in as a cycle of building organizations in the locale, and in the nation as a whole. Thus, the outfit likewise mirrors the way toward building regional integration that represent genuine federalism which has eluded the country for a considerable length of time (*ibid*).

(c) Effective Grassroots Policing

Respondents representing 37% and 54% agree and strongly agree that Operation Amotekun will foster effective grassroots policing. 2% of the respondents are indifferent about it. 3% and 4% of the respondents disagree and strongly disagree that “Operation Amotekun” will enhance effective security at the grassroots level. Security responsibility to the general population would increase at the grassroots due to the participation of grassroot indigenes in security operations. Regional and grassroots policing involves a collaboration of endeavours between the police and the neighbourhood vigilante; which can engender security accountability (Ikuteyijo 2008). Amotekun network would additionally connect the police and the individual members of Southwest communities together. The organization established after sometime can at least assist the police force in discovering the fundamental reasons for crimes in a particular area. By working with the regional operation Amotekun, the police have more assets accessible to them to help intercept criminal activities. By acquainting themselves with the individual officers from the Amotekun network, Police officers are bound to acquire significant data about crooks and their exercises (Goddey, 2018). Likewise they are bound to acquire a solid assessment of the requirements of residents and their desires for the police. It would get simpler as traditional institutional leadership is more helpful in handling the security of the region, as closeness exist between the office and the customary ruler. The activity would increase the level of trust that individual have for the governments (state and federal) in securing lives and properties. It would probably diminish the criminal activities in the locals of the states within the Southwest region. It might fill in as a decent format to adopt by other geopolitical regions in Nigeria in fighting crimes (*ibid*).

(d) Enhancing Police-Community Relations

The respondents also view “Operation Amotekun” as important for police-community relations as 28% and 68% of the respondents agree and strongly agree , 2% respondents indifferent, 2% and 0% of the respondents disagree and strongly disagree. Operation Amotekun can unite police and locals to combat crime and tackle neighbourhood issues. With operation Amotekun, it is would be effective to forestall crimes before it occurs, as against reacting to calls after the diverse crimes happens. Operation Amotekun will give residents more opportunity to enjoying personal satisfaction regarding the security of their locale. Amotekun policing implies security effort becoming part of the Southwest communities in Nigeria (Emeka and Nwokedi, 2019). The regional initiative will assists police with improving feeling of occupant's needs and causes inhabitants to create more noteworthy trust in the police. Those who accept that Amotekun policing in the neighborhood are bound to communicate ideal assessments of the police to the general public (Weitzer and Tuch, 2006). Amotekun network

and the police force can cooperate to accomplish a shared objective; a more secure and better spot to live.

Amotekun operation has the potential of assuming a crucial part in the two significant components of policing: Nigeria Police-community relations and insecurity (Wroblewski and Hess, 2003). Police-Community relations as enhanced by Operation Amotekun would widen police overarching objectives of security responsibilities. Second, it ought to change the manner in which police are deployed to achieve their objectives. Actualizing community base security initiative in Southwest Nigeria in the form of Amotekun Operation changes the style and management of policing Southwest communities (*Ibid*).

(e) Active Community Participation in Security Issues

“Operation Amotekun” to encouraging active community participation has been endorsed by 36% and 58% of the respondents who agree and strongly agree while 0 respondents is indifferent, 4% and 2% of the respondents disagree and strongly disagree. With any strategy for Amotekun policing there will be points of interest. One of the fundamental points of interest to Amotekun policing is that it dwindles fear in the community. By bringing security operation close to the grassroots communities, the people will have a sense of safety (Adishi and Gbenemene, 2017). As resident participate more in security issues in their locale, they would better comprehend what police force really do on a daily basis. This improves police-amotekun relations. Another preferred position in looking at the prospect of the Southwest security initiative is that Amotekun policing would be adaptable and fit for evolving (Muluken, 2019). The arrangements and procedures can be easily changed as the network changes to suit the security situation of communities from time to time. Although, that an arrangement works in a state within the southwest region doesn't imply that it will work in other states. Amotekun operation can easily cooperate with members of local communities to concoct arrangements that would be efficient in their own neighbourhood. Amotekun Network policing offers a bunch of advantages. Utilizing the abilities and assets accessible in the hinterlands will help the police force to effectively discharge their national role of security provision (*Ibid*).

Challenges of Operation Amotekun

“Operation Amotekun” would have been pointless if there had been effective policing in the country. The Southwest security framework became fundamental when the individuals in the region got helpless against assaults by individuals they know as strangers. It is additionally accepted that the state security agents are aliens and don't have a clue about the landscape. Amotekun is locally situated and comprehends the territory. It is an essential effort for the sanity of the Southwest Nigeria (Vanguard, 2020). However, possible challenges have been identified and discussed below.

(a) Autonomy and Inter-Security Agents Clash

The majority, 33% and 61% respondents agree and strongly agree that autonomy and formal – informal security agency clash will be a challenge for the “Operation Amotekun” in the Southwest region. 5% of the respondents are indifferent about the autonomy and possible clash while 1% of the respondents disagree and 0% strongly disagrees. The primary setback is that the issue of the autonomy for the "Operation Amotekun" may culminate in clash with state

security actors. The viewpoint that, the Amotekun should operate freely in Southwest states and relate territorially may cause struggle among the levels of government and other security offices. Thus the Police, NSCDC and the Army may consider "Operation Amotekun" a rival. They may consider them to be outshining the state security agents. The consequence of working in opposite direction is inevitable through miscommunication. In the event of clash between that the security forces and Amotekun agents, the goals of ensuring security may be ruined (The Guardian, 2020).

(b) Adequate Training for Recruits

On the recruits getting adequate training, 35% and 63% agree and strongly agreed, 1% indifference while 0% respondents disagree and 1% strongly disagrees that getting adequate training would be a challenge. Once more, there is the issue of satisfactory training and firepowers as well as the security of the Amotekun agents themselves. The Inspector General of Police expressly states, that there are sure classes of arms that won't be found with the Amotekun. Hence, they might not be able to match the sophistication of criminals with predominant firepower. They may likewise confront funding difficulties. The Southwest governors face a ton of financial dilemma. In the event that they are not paid by the state government, the Amotekun agents may become lawbreakers themselves (Punch, 2020).

(c) Fear of Dismemberment

Respondents representing 40% and 55% agree and strongly agree that the fear of dismemberment of Nigeria will hamper the activities of "Operation Amotekun". 3% of the respondents are indifferent. 1% and 1% of the respondents disagree and strongly disagree. The way that the Southwest geopolitical zone has been at the bleeding edge of the formation of state police in Nigeria, instigate fear, particularly from Northern region, that "Operation Amotekun" activity looks like an indirect effort for the Southwest to accomplish state police. "Operation Amotekun" is in danger of unnecessary meddling from Northern 'big heads' who fear that institutionalisation of state security network would result in the dismemberment of the Nigerian state (Akinwunmi, 2020).

(d) Tool for Personal Discord

That "Operation Amotekun" will be vulnerable to be used as tool for settling personal discord is also evident in 28% and 68% of the respondents who agree and strongly agree while 2% respondents is indifferent, 2% and 0% of the respondents disagree and strongly disagree. If not cautioned, recruits of the "Operation Amotekun" might see themselves as 'security lords' who can do and undo. Uncultured agents might take laws in to their hands; using the "Operation Amotekun" platform as tool for settling personal discord, revenge and/or vengeance, oppression and intimidation of the general public (*Ibid*). This envisaged challenge stem from the experience with Yoruba cultural non-state organisation that have caused troubles in Southwest Nigeria until cautioned. Same way, some members of the Oodua People Congress had been deployed overtime as political thugs, the members of Operation Amotekun if not well paid, well furnished, well catered for, well psychologically oriented and shaped might be easily manipulated by political "machiavellians" who believe the end justify the means instead of respecting the sanctity of the purpose of creating Operation Amotekun (Muluken, 2019).

(e) Lack of Prosecutorial Power

The lack of capacity to prosecute criminals have also been identified as a possible challenge to “Operation Amotekun” as 37% agree, 58% strongly agree, 1% indifferent, 1% and 3% disagree and strongly disagree. The lack of capacity to prosecute arrested criminal is a clog in the wheel of Amotekun operation in the Southwest Nigeria. This is a challenge as it slows the pace of the corps. This hampers the operation Amotekun from punishing offenders. Instance is the case of Chinese arrested at illegal mining sites were granted administrative bail and were never arraigned (The Punch, 2020).

Conclusion and Recommendation

It is glaring that the government and its security agencies have failed woefully in providing adequate security for the citizens. Several reasons account for the failure; corruption, weak firepower, poverty and the most notable reason is the inadequate manpower such that hinterlands in Nigeria communities are marginalised or better put are excluded from the protection of state security. Communities which are not properly secured are victims of armed robbery, armed banditry, herders/farmers conflict, kidnapping and theft. The lack of protection of those communities is evident in the delayed response of the police force when called upon to intercept or interrupt any criminal operations. The security officers usually showed up hours after the incidence that members of the communities are terrorised, robbed, maimed or killed. The need for non-state security actors in Nigeria is non-negotiable, particularly, “Operation Amotekun” in the Southwest Nigeria where peace daily eludes the communities within the region.

The existence and operations of “Operation Amotekun” holds promise and potentials, but certainly not without risks and challenges that could endanger national security. Therefore, the articulation of a strategic framework for robust engagement with non-state security initiative is sine qua non for sustainable security in Nigeria. The study recommends that legal framework is important in ensuring that Amotekun initiative is properly regulated and made to be accountable; funding of “Operation Amotekun” should be made statutory, making them sustainable and uneasy to manipulate for political thuggery. Though recruitment into “Operation Amotekun” is voluntary, biodata of its members should be collected and stored for references to prevent impersonation for any form of criminal act. Close collaboration between the state security actors and the Amotekun players should be made compulsory. To optimise the contributions of “Operation Amotekun” to national security, the study recommends, among others, the enactment of a national legislation to regulate the activities of non-state security initiative. The need for Community Security Fund to ensure a more reliable and transparent funding of “Operation Amotekun” cannot be over emphasised. Capacity building programme and orientation for members of ‘Operation Amotekun’ is important to prevent human right violation.

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