

developmentdiscourse

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STATE POLICE? IF YES, HOW?





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Preamble

Police is one of the central institutions of a democratic society. Indeed, good and adequate policing typifies some of the tenets of democracy and the rule of law.

The rule of law is fundamental in advancing democracy as it is central in protecting rights, enhancing public trust, and promoting inclusiveness. The police force is an institution of the state but supervised by the executive arm of government for the maintenance of law and order in any society. It plays a vital role in ensuring peaceful coexistence among the citizens without which life in the society would be nasty, brutish and short.

However, since Nigeria's return to democracy in 1999, insecurity appears to have worsened with the nation's democratic journey. The issue has become more forceful in the last four years as multiple internal challenges increasingly threaten the security and stability of the country. These security challenges range from cybercrimes, ethnoreligious and economic resource-driven violent conflicts to the more familiar acts of kidnapping,

piracy and violent robbery and other forms of criminality and violence perpetrated by armed groups. Citizens, as well as security operatives, have not been spared from the activities of criminals. A situation where hoodlums attack police stations with ease says a lot about the safety of community residents. The persistence of security challenges portrays the failure of the effectiveness of the strategies put in place by the nation's security agencies.

Section 214 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria designate the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) as the national police with exclusive jurisdiction throughout the country for maintaining public safety and order. The surging level of security challenges in Nigeria has caused great concern for Nigerians. It has shown that the NPF has been largely ineffectual in handling the worsening security conditions nationwide. Therefore, the consciousness of many stakeholders in the security sector has been heightened to brainstorm on possible solutions to issues of insecurity and the Nigerian Police. A recurring policy recommendation is the need to decentralise the Police Force as currently

constituted and create State Police Forces across the country. This recommendation has elicited strong arguments for and against state police/policing.

This edition of Nextier's "Development Discourse" explored policing in Nigeria. The discourse focused on the federal government's proposed community policing architecture and the agitation for state police/policing in the country. The panellists were AIG Austin Iwar (rtd.) (Senior Policing Adviser, Nigeria Policing Programme) and Dr. Vladimir Kreck (Resident Representative, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Nigeria). Patrick O. Okigbo III (Founder/Principal Partner, Nextier) moderated the session.

Why is the Nigeria Police Force unable to solve Nigeria security problems?

No doubt, the Nigerian Police Force has been found wanting in the performance of its essential duties. But a proper

understanding of the issues hampering the effectiveness of the police is imperative at this stage. In the course of the session, panellists and the participating audience highlighted the challenges with policing in Nigeria ([see video](#)) and outlined the arguments for and against state police.

Shortage of Manpower: This point has been stated as the recurrent missing link for the inability of the Nigeria police to secure the nation. As the population of the country continues to increase at about 2.60 per cent in 2019, staff strength of the Nigerian Police Force has continued to decrease. For instance, a country like Pakistan with a population of over 200 million, just like Nigeria, has a combined federal and provincial law enforcement with about 575,000 personnel (Abbas,





2011)¹, against Nigeria's 371,800 personnel. From the global firepower index, while Pakistan has 654,000 active military personnel and can boast of 550,000 reserves, Nigeria has 120,000 active military personnel and has no reserve personnel. While the Nigeria army is already overstretched, there is no doubt that the Nigerian Police Force is grossly incapacitated to maintain security for over 200 million Nigerians. This is in addition to the fact that a good percentage of the Police Force is sourced out to guard the rich, politically-exposed persons, private companies, amongst others.

Funding: Government often fails to provide a corresponding increase in funding to modernise, train, equip, and manage the Police Force. Just like most public institutions in the country, police training institutions are in a sorry state. As a result, the force graduates undertrained and ill-equipped professionals.

Increase in social inequality: Violent conflicts have worsened in the country with an increasing level of poverty in the land. Nigeria has been adjudged the poverty capital of the world, as 48 per cent of the population live in extreme poverty. According to the Nigeria Bureau of Statistics, unemployment has increased from 17.6 million in Q4 2017 to 20.9 million in Q3 2018. Some of these individuals have been out of job for more than three years. Studies have stressed that poverty and its

driving factors increase insecurity. Inability to meet basic needs widens inequality and exposes people to a life of crime to make ends meet. Policing in Nigeria will be counter-productive when the underlying elements of insecurity (such as social disparities and inequality) are not resolved.

Unprofessionalism: Violent conflicts have worsened in the country with some members of the police terrorising the citizens they are sworn to protect. In recent months, there has been an increase in the reports of crimes committed by security agents. Public confidence in the police is worsened by unprofessionalism and institutional dysfunction of the force. How can citizens who don't trust the police partner with them to fight crime? The seeming inability of the state to prosecute errant police officers has deepened the public distrust and resentment towards the criminal justice institutions, and, by extension, the state itself. These inadequacies impede intelligence gathering and collaboration between citizens and the police.

Policing mandate: Nigeria's security architecture is fragmented when compared to other developed nations. There is a proliferation of agencies that are created with almost similar mandates and without a clear-cut demarcation. Yet Section 214 of the 1999 Constitution states that no other police force shall be established for the Federation or any part thereof apart from

¹ Abbas, H. 2011. "Reforming Pakistan's Police and Law Enforcement Infrastructure is it Too Flawed to Fix?". USIP, Washington, DC.

Nigeria Police Force. For instance, apart from the Nigeria Police Force, there are seven core federal agencies responsible for police assignments in the country. These agencies include Federal Road Safety Corps, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, National Agency for the Prevention of Trafficking of Persons and other Related Matters, Independent Corrupt Practices Commission, Economic and Financial Crimes Commission. Currently, the Army, which is deployed for security operations in almost all the 36 states of the federation, is also carrying out policing duties. The danger with this trend is the standoff and inter-agency rivalry rather than safeguarding the nation.

Police control: Federal government's control of the Nigeria Police Force enables it to use police power for parochial and political purposes leading to abuse as well as the inability of the force to function as an independent, nonpartisan body (Arase, 2018). Section 215 (1) of the 1999 Constitution provides that the President shall appoint an Inspector-General of Police from among serving members of Nigeria Police Force on the advice of the Nigeria Police Council. The President also determines membership of the Council. The reality is that the appointment and dismissal of the police head are at the sole whim of the President because the advice of the Police Council is not binding on him. The Nigeria Police Force is largely under the control of the President, as Section 215(3) and (4) of the Constitution supports that the Inspector General of Police comply with directions of the President.

Legal framework: The Police Act with the police regulations provides comprehensive legislation with detailed powers and duties of the force, including the prevention and

detection of crime. Nevertheless, the Police Act is subject to the Constitution which created it — taking it back to the constitutional subject of the force and its operational head to the control of the President (Arase, 2018)².

Police Reform

Police reform is a topic that has continued to dominate public discourse around the world just as in Nigeria. Successive Nigerian governments have made various efforts to reform the police. Nigeria has had three Presidential Committees focused on police reforms: Dan Mandami-led committee (2006), M.D. Yusuf-led committee (2008), and Parry Osayande-led committee (2012). Similarly, between 2011 to 2014, a committee was set up to develop a National Public Security Strategy for Nigeria.

Civil society voices have not been left out of the discussions around police reforms. In 2012, a Civil Society Panel was established to ensure civil society organisations' input in the debates. The Panel operated under the auspices of the Network on Police Reform in Nigeria (NOPRIN) with technical support and facilitation by the CLEEN Foundation. The Presidential Committees and NOPRIN recommended a total overhaul and transformation of the entire police force for optimal performance. According to Chukwuma (2008)³, these various efforts have yielded marginal successes.

Challenges with Police Reforms

For a number of interconnected reasons, Nigeria has been unable to implement the recommendations for police reforms. It has had a challenge with continuity of policies by successive administrations in the country (Makinde, 2005)⁴. Nigeria's public

² Arase, S.E. 2018. "A Critical Analysis of the Pros and Cons of State Policing: To Be or Not to Be." A Paper Presented at NBA Benin Branch, June 2018 Law Week.

³ Chukwuma, I. 2008. "Motions Without Movement" Report of the Presidential Committees on Police Reforms in Nigeria." CLEEN Foundation, Abuja.

⁴ Makinde, T. 2005. Problems of Policy Implementation in Developing Nations: The Nigerian Experience. *Journal of Social Sciences*.



institutions have significant capacity challenges and are unable to drive significant reforms (Agagu, 2008)⁵. Lack of political will to push through reform processes continues to limit any call for the implementation of reform programmes (Bolaji, 2005). Other challenges with implementing the Police Reforms include manpower shortage, lack of reliable statistics, corruption, over-ambitious policy goals, inadequate funds, etc.

A significant challenge that merits special attention is the legal framework establishing the Nigerian Police Force. The Force is governed by a law enacted in 1943. Several efforts have been made to repeal the law and provide an improved legal framework for the ongoing reform initiatives. A draft bill was discussed and approved by the interagency committee before presentation to the House of

Representatives in 2005. Other drafts were presented to both chambers of the National Assembly between 2005 and 2018. However, in May 2019, the lower house of the 8th Assembly rejected the Police Reform Bill after the Senate passed it because some provisions of the bill were said to be against the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

The lack of political will to implement the recommendations of the various police reform committees is another significant challenge. A prerequisite for any successful change is the intent and sustained action by the political leadership. Initiation of reforms needs the right political backings without which the process cannot be implemented or maintained. The usual practice in the country is to set up panels that come up with far-reaching reports that receive minimal implementation. Indeed,

⁵ Agagu, A.A. 2008. "Re-Inventing the Nigerian Public Service in an Age of Reforms" in *Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences*, 5 (3).

it appears that setting up presidential committees has become a pretext for evading responsibility and an effective ploy to squash any agitations for reform in Nigeria.

Clarification of Terms

To discuss state police or policing, it is important to start with a shared understanding of the concepts. This section starts with a definition of the core concepts before outlining the arguments (for and against) state police or policing.

Community Policing

Wroblewski and Hess (2003) defined community policing as "an organisation-wide philosophy and management approach that promotes community, government and police partnerships; proactive problem solving; and community engagement to address the cause of crime, fear of crime and other community issues".⁶

State Police

State police, according to Agwanwo (2014)⁷, is a form of subnational policing where there is a devolution of security operations performed by the police between federating states in the country.

other levels of government other than the national or federal government.⁷

Arguments For and Against State Police

From the preceding pages, several explanations can be adduced for the continuous calls for a decentralised police. The failure of the federal police to secure the environment and protect the citizens has raised for different parts of the country to seek their own regional or state solutions.

Arguments for State Police

The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) makes provision for a single police force and no other arrangements. Funding of the Police and other security services are under the Exclusive Legislative List. Likewise, funding for the force is directly from the Federal government. The Constitution empowers the President to appoint an Inspector General of Police. This current structure of the Nigerian Police Force makes its administration and operation a Federal government responsibility. As Adedeji (2012)⁸ notes, the top-to-bottom order (Federal to other levels of government) has significantly affected effective policing in



In this arrangement, the state policing functions are managed and controlled in

⁶ Wroblewski, H. M. and Hess, K. M. (2003): Introduction to Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice seventh edition. U.K. Wards worth.

⁷ D.E. Agwanwo (2014). State Policing and Policing Efficiency in Nigeria. Research on Humanities and Social Sciences. Vol 4 No 25.

⁸ Adedeji, O.A. 2012. State Police in Nigeria: Issues and Challenges, in *University of Pennsylvania Journal of Constitutional Law*

Nigeria. The police personnel have been stretched thin to meet up with the ever-evolving dynamics of insecurity in the country, especially the insurgency in the northwest and increasing incidents of banditry in the northwest.

There are several arguments for states in Nigeria to have their own police forces. First, as already discussed in the preceding pages, there has been an unprecedented rise of security challenges in the country, thus, requiring a matching degree of governmental actions to address them. The nature of insecurity requires a constant review of approaches and policies that aims to maintain the security of lives and properties. Familiar opinions are that the establishment of state police will be informed and influenced by the peculiarities of the security situation in a given state (Adeniji, 2018)⁹. State police forces would be able to maintain law and order, ensure the safety and security of citizens and investments in the state.

Second, as currently agitated for, is the need for community policing as it will allow community members to have a say in the way they are policed. The initiative is better actualised with the creation of the state police structure (Eme & Anyadike, 2013)¹⁰. Many countries of the world have successfully implemented the community policing strategy as a response to the complexity of issues around insecurity. Some of these countries also have a decentralised police framework. According to Abah (2019)¹¹ community policing, the police are expected to learn from the citizens, to involve them in crime prevention and ensure accountability in the community. The underlying imperative is to have policing structure that directly works

with citizens to reduce crime at the neighbourhood level.

The United Nations recommends one police officer for every 450 citizens.¹² With about 371,800 police personnel, Nigeria has a ratio of one police officer for about 543 people. This is grossly inadequate for a population that grows at 2.6 per cent yearly. The proposed state police promises a recruitment process that will augment the existing number of police personnel in the country. According to Adeniji (2018), although the creation of state police may impact on the availability of personnel to be recruited based on federal character principles, it will help to cater for ethnic minorities within the state as opposed to a nationwide observance to equal representation. The argument is that there will be a massive addition of police personnel to the existing status quo.

In some states, there are already a multiplicity of quasi-security organisations that perform some policing activities. These quasi-security structures contribute to maintaining security in these states (Olaniyi, 2013)¹³. These organisations have introduced a myriad of problems ranging from control, discipline, mode of operation. Furthermore, because they are not officially domiciled as institutions of the state but rather mere creation of political regimes, it has become a herculean task to effectively regulate their activities. Consequent upon this, internal and external mechanisms to promote accountability are weak and, in the absence of standard procedures, unit heads of these informal security actors will assert their discretion in the cause of ensuring accountability (Abah, 2019)¹⁴. With state police, mock security

⁹ Adeniji, M.K. 2018. "State Policing: A Case of Devolution" in *Police Reform in Nigeria: The Devolution Debate*. Owen, O. (Ed.) Monograph Series. No 30. CLEEN Foundation, Abuja.

¹⁰ Eme, O.I. and Anyadike, N.O. 2013. "Security Challenges and the Imperatives of State Police" in *Review of Public Administration & Management* Vol. 1, No. 2.

¹¹ Abah, N.C. 2019. Policing the Nigerian Society Through Community Policing Strategy: The Role of the Citizen. *African Psychologist: The*

International Journal of Psychology and Allied Professions. Vol 9, Issue 1. 2019

¹² <https://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/october-2009/security-highest-bidder>

¹³ Olaniyi, R. 2013. *Community Vigilantes in Metropolitan Kano 1985-2005*. IFRA-Nigeria, Ibadan.

¹⁴ Abah, N.C. 2019. "Policing the Nigerian Society Through Community Policing Strategy: The Role of the Citizen" in *African Psychologist: The International Journal of Psychology and Allied Professions*. Vol 9, Issue 1. 2019

organisations will be mostly subsumed into the official state police structure with adequate training on effective policing provided. The ones that cannot be law enforcement agents will be disarmed, demobilised, and rehabilitated so as not to become threats to peace and security.

Another argument in favour of state police in Nigeria is that it is a step towards restructuring the country to become a true federation. In federalism, there is no concentration of powers in the central government as powers are shared between the central government and its constituent units. In this, system, Olu-Adeyemi (2017)¹⁵ posits that power is shared in such a way that each recipient constituent assumes a separate existence and commands relatively exclusive authority over some specified sphere of state activity, in principle, ensures such a balance.¹⁵

Also, Igbuzor (2018)¹⁶ postulates that proponents of state police are of the view that state-based police forces are a feature of most federal systems.¹⁶ For instance, the United States of America, Australia, India, amongst others all practice federal and state police structures (ibid). There are arguments that powers are over-concentrated in the central government under the Exclusive Legislative List, leaving minimal powers and functions to constituents in the federalist structure. As it is currently constituted, the responsibility of providing security in Nigeria is vested in the federal government as contained in the Exclusive list. The creation of state police with a level of control by state governments will push the security item from the exclusive list to the concurrent list where both levels of government have the statutory backing to operate. This will be a success in the quest to give more powers

and responsibilities to other levels of government other than the federal government.

Arguments Against State Police

State police is not a new concept in Nigeria. It existed during the First Republic as Regional and Native Authority Police Forces. Until 1966, the local police forces in Northern and Western Nigeria worked with the Nigerian Police Force (created in 1930) with national jurisdiction. Following the emergence of Major- General J.T.U. Aguyi-Ironsi as the head of military government, a Working Party on Nigeria Police, Local Government and Native Authority and Police and Prisons was established to consider the desirability of a unified police and prisons service. With the death of Ironsi in the July 1966 coup, the Panel submitted its report to the military regime led by General Yakubu Gowon and recommended the abolition of local police forces and prison services.

Poor training, recruitment of party thugs, corruption, partisan political use of the local police by traditional rulers and politicians were some of the reason given by the Committee for the condemnation of the local police forces (Fayemi, 2003)¹⁷.

Following the pogroms of 1966 and the role played by the forces, the local police were finally disbanded by General Yakubu Gowon.

The inability of the local police to remain professional and nonpartisan in times of political crisis which undermined Nigeria's democracy remains a major argument against the reestablishment of state police in Nigeria (Owen, 2018).¹⁸

¹⁵ Olu-Adeyemi, L., 2017. "Federalism in Nigeria – Problems, Prospects and the Imperative of Restructuring". *International Journal Advances in Social Sciences and Humanities*.

¹⁶ Igbuzor, O. 2018. "Federal and State Policing: Notes Towards a Combined Framework". *Police Reform in Nigeria: The Devolution Debate*. Cleen Foundation., Abuja.

¹⁷ Fayemi, J.K. 2003." Entrenched Military Interests and the Future of Democracy in Nigeria" in *Federalism in Africa: The Imperative of Democratic Development*, Volume 2, Gana, A.T. & Egwu, S.G (Eds.) Africa World Press, Eritrea

¹⁸ Owen, O. 2018. "Introduction: The Devolved Policing Debate – The Need for Evidence" in *Police Reform in Nigeria: The Devolution Debate*. Owen, O. (Ed.) Monograph Series. No 30. CLEEN Foundation, Abuja.

As Nwogwugwu & Kupoluyi (2018)¹⁹ posit, the power struggle between politicians and mobilisation of political gangs during the First Republic during the 'Operation Wetie' served as the remote cause of the nation's journey to military rule as first military coup occurred on the 15th January 1966. This is not to state that the federal government is immune from abuse of power because there have been instances where the police have been used to achieve political advantage by the federal governments. This school of thought fears that if state police get fully approved, incumbent governors will use it to persecute their opposition.

As Fayemi (2003)²⁰ notes "state governors agitate for state police forces so that they can deploy them to harass opponents and promote partisan interests" It is believed the state governors will abuse the security unit and convert it into an instrument for achieving the political agenda. The inability of state governors to stay clear of the affairs of governance at the local government level validates this argument (Aleyomi, 2013).²¹ As Aleyomi points out, governors do not care about the third tier of government rather have turned local government chairmen into glorified 'houseboys'. The proponents hold that if the state governors cannot allow the local government to function as an independent tier of government, why should anyone believe that they will not interfere in the affairs of the State Police Forces?

Another objection to the establishment of state police is the challenge at which issues in the country are interrogated mainly through ethnic and religious lenses. Nigeria is a highly polarised nation. The pogroms and activities of 1966 have shown the speed at which people are mobilised along identity lines to commit heinous

atrocities. Similarly, there is the challenge of public trust and safety especially for non-indigenes with regards to indigene-settler divides (Owen,2018).²² The contention is that the introduction of state police in a highly ethnic and religiously-charged nation like Nigeria will further help to tribalise and regionalise the nation.

The third argument against the reestablishment is that the state and local vigilante groups currently established in some states across the federation are committing human right abuses and terrorising citizens, the same damning allegations of abuse against the Nigerian Police Force. How effective have these structures been in providing security, when reports have shown that rather than curb crime, actions of vigilante groups have led to extra-judicial killings, unlawful detentions, torture, inhuman and degrading treatment of innocent citizens. Reports by Human Rights Watch and the Centre for Law Enforcement Education (CLEEN) (2002)²³ shows that endorsement of these groups by the state governments makes them easily accessible for use to target and intimidate individuals perceived as a threat. While there are views that the governors will never abuse the state police as they provide checks and balances. Current reality shows the contrary as most State Houses of Assembly members toe the line of a sitting governor and barely challenge such authority; as the case of the decamped Imo state House of Assembly, lawmakers have shown.

Besides the abuse of power, one of the contentious issues with state police in Nigeria has been linked to funding. Lack of funds has been adduced as a major reason why the Nigerian Police Force has underperformed over the years. The country already spends far less on security

¹⁹ Nwogwugwu, N. and Kupoluyi, A.K.2018. "Interrogating the Desirability of State Policing in Nigeria" in *Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, Vol. 20, Issue 5, Ver. IV.

²⁰ Fayemi, J.K. 2003." Entrenched Military Interests and the Future of Democracy in Nigeria" in *Federalism in Africa: The Imperative of Democratic Development*, Volume 2, Gana, A.T. & Egwu, S.G (Eds.) Africa World Press, Eritrea.

²¹ Aleyomi, M.B.2013. "Is State Police a Panacea to Security Threat in Nigeria?", *International Journal of Police Science and Management*, Vol.11. No.3.

²² ²² Owen, O. 2018. Op. cit.

²³ HRW/ CLEEN. 2002. "The Bakassi Boys: The Legitimization of Murder and Torture." Vol. 14, No. 5 (A).



than is stipulated. Maintaining a dual policing structure could be economical strenuous for a nation that is nearly bankrupt.

The federal government often fail to provide a corresponding increase in funding to modernise, train, equip, and manage the federal police force. How then can states that depend solely on revenue accruing from the federal government afford the monthly salary of state police officers? (Owen, 2018).²⁴

Although there are arguments that some states have been responsible for funding the NPF but not all the states are financially viable. Many Nigerian states are unable to afford the minimum wage of workers without the additional burden of funding a police force. Furthermore, there are arguments that the monies often directed to states as security vote has been an avenue for the state governors to channel money into their private accounts and deliberately fuel insecurity in their states.

The shift in global trend is another argument against state police. Given the global rise of terrorism and transnational crime networks, some developed countries are shifting away from decentralised police force to a single centralised policing structure. According to Arase (2018), countries that have adopted this approach include the United Kingdom (U.K.) with the establishment of the National Crime Agency (NCA) to take primacy in U.K. law enforcement's response to serious and organised crime. In Scotland, all regional forces have been replaced by a single force, Police Scotland. The establishment of the Department of Homeland Security in the United States of America. The establishment is an aggregation of 22 different Federal law enforcement departments and agencies into a unified national agency with a national and international policing mandate.

Conclusion

²⁴ Owen, O.2018.op.cit.

There is no single defined model for organising a nation's police force. Each nation faces peculiar challenges that will determine the path to tread. Each model has its challenges. But whether centralised or decentralised what is needed is an efficient, responsive and accountable police force. Safety of lives and property must be paramount above political debate.

Recommendations

In spite of these arguments for and against State Police, the overarching goal is to improve policing in Nigeria. The arguments presented so far have elucidated the following recommendations.

The Nigerian Police Force, as currently composed, is ineffectual in addressing the rising insecurity nationwide. Much of this inadequacy has largely been associated with poor funding, corruption, lack of manpower, abuse of human rights, amongst others. These challenges have significantly impacted on public support in crime prevention. According to Human Rights Watch, 'the Nigerian Police Force has become a symbol of unfettered corruption, mismanagement and abuse'.²⁵ These challenges have necessitated the Police Reform Bill.

The Bill seeks to deliver a legally-backed framework for effective policing in Nigeria. It intends to make the Nigerian Police Force more responsive to public needs while upholding values such as fairness, justice and equity (ibid).²⁶ In essence, the Police Reform Bill is a desire to overhaul the Nigerian Police Force factoring in a comprehensive array of challenges and prospects within the force including funding, personnel strength, improved policing, amongst others.

It is a general expectation that if the Police Reform Bill is passed into law and implemented, it will significantly address

the challenges towards effective policing in Nigeria. The Nigerian Police Force should become a highly reputable, accountable and effectual agency of government. In line with this, the Security Sector Reform (SSR) is another activity the Police Force is strategically poised to benefit from if all its aspects come into fruition.

If Nigeria intends to adopt state police, there should be a constitutional amendment to that effect. This means that the issue of policing will be removed from the exclusive list and domiciled in the concurrent list where both levels of government can function. Other policy actions will include the following;

Funding

One of the concerns raised against state policing is the issue of funding. The Nigerian Police Force is underfunded. In the 2020 budget, allocation to the Federal Ministry of Police Affairs stood at over N400 billion with about 96 per cent spent on recurrent expenditures like salaries, amongst others.²⁷ Only about 3.25 per cent is spent on capital expenditure which includes the purchase of security

equipment, motor vehicles, structural developments and renovations, amongst others (ibid).²⁷ In March 2019, the Inspector General of Police lamented that the Police Force received less than 20 per cent of the N25 billion capital budget for security outfit.

While the NPF is underfunded, Nigeria spends huge sums of money every month on security votes. Security votes are budgeted funds provided to certain federal, state, and local government officials to spend at their discretion on—in theory—anything security-related.²⁸ According to a

²⁵ <https://www.hrw.org/report/2010/08/17/everyones-game/corruption-and-human-rights-abuses-nigeria-police-force>

²⁶ ibid

²⁷ <https://punchng.com/2020-military-police-to-spend-91-of-budgets-on-salaries-others/>

²⁸ <https://punchng.com/2020-military-police-to-spend-91-of-budgets-on-salaries-others/>

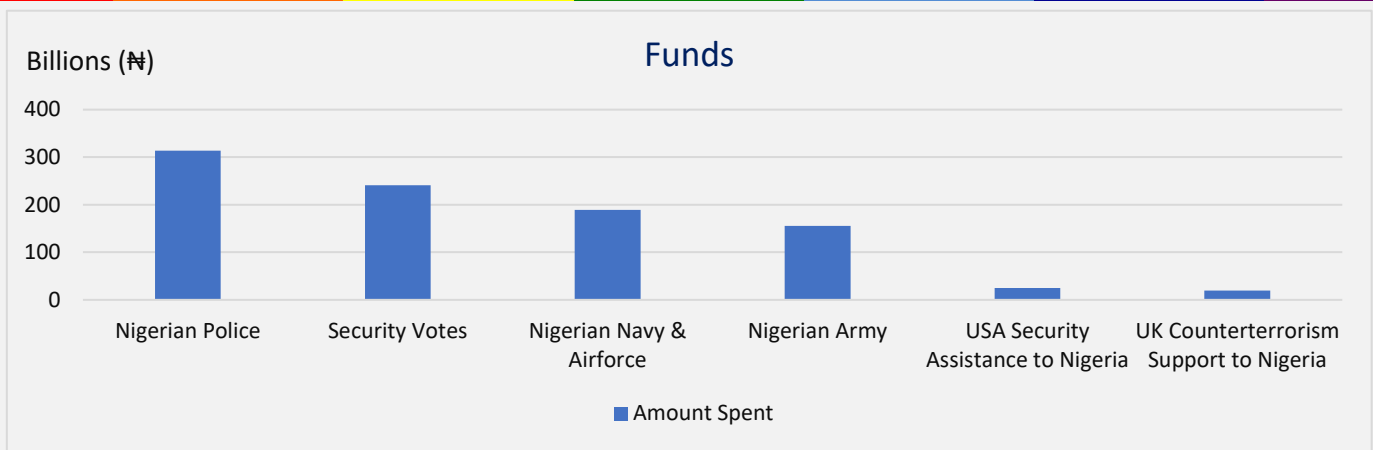


Fig 1. Comparison of the amount spent on security votes, security organisations and some security funds received in 2018.

[Transparency International](#) (T.I.) report in 2018, Nigeria spent about N241 billion annually on security votes. The amount is higher than the Nigerian Army's annual budget at N155.4 billion, and more than the combined total budget of the Nigerian Navy and the Airforce at N189.2 billion (ibid).²⁹ Also, it is 12 times the United Kingdom Counterterrorism support promised to Nigeria from 2016 to 2020 valued at N19.2 billion, nine times the United States of America's security assistance to Nigeria since 2012 totalling N24.7 billion and over 70 per cent of the Nigerian Police force annual budget at N313.5 billion (ibid).³⁰

Monies currently allocated as security votes should either be used to complement funding to the current structure or be used to fund the state police. Since state governments use such funds to provide support to security organisations in their respective states and also to fund pseudo-police bodies, it can be properly channelled to the state policing plan. With a decentralised framework, it will be easier to demand accountability within the system.

Another worrisome challenge is the accountability issue. Although, a multisectoral problem, its menace in the security sector is quite evident. In the past, there have been cases of embezzlement and misappropriation of funds within the force. The expectation is that if available

funds are properly utilised, the argument of poor funding may not be substantial as accountability measures will be put in place to achieve value for money. Furthermore, with accountability a big issue, if more funds are provided without curbing corruption in the system, it will still be mismanaged by corrupt officials.

The issue of control is also predominant among antagonists to state police. The fear is that State Police Forces will most likely become a tool for political oppression in the hands of state governors. However, building strong institutions will help to checkmate the excesses of the state governors in using State Police Forces. The institutions of government such as the legislature and judiciary should fully utilise their powers to checkmate each other including the executive arm of government.

Police and policing cannot secure a country if greater attention is not given to the consolidation of democracy and good governance, and productive economy. Nigeria needs to improve economic productivity and opportunities for citizens to end poverty. This entails investing in human capital and creating jobs for the teeming jobless youths.

Click to watch [full video](#) and [view pictures](#) of the session.

²⁹ [Transparency International](#)

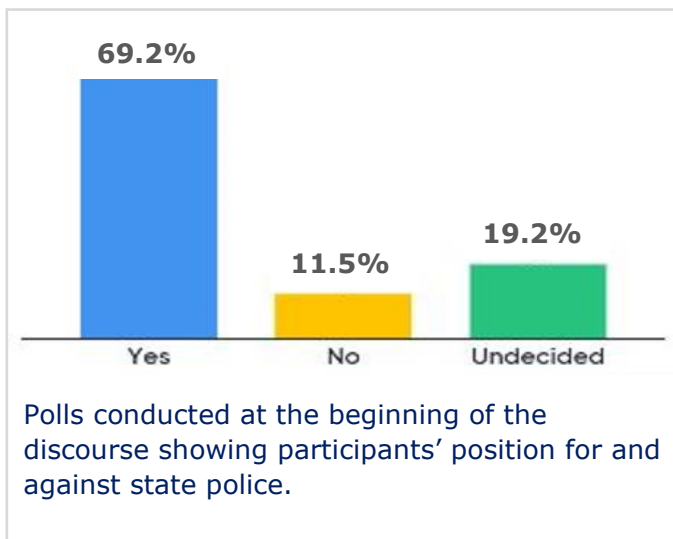
³⁰ [Transparency International](#)

Mentimeter Surveys

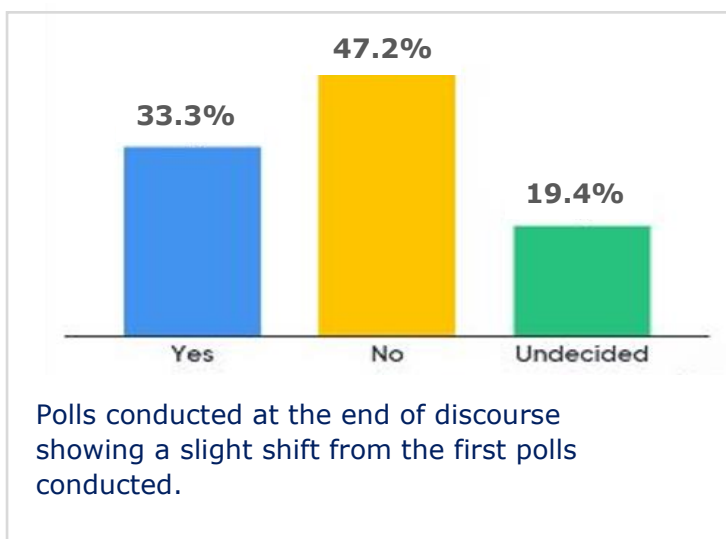
The session included two Mentimeter surveys, an online platform for participants to share views in public discourses. The polls were conducted at the beginning and at the end of the discourse to determine participants' views on State Police.

Should states in Nigeria have their own police?

Before the Session



End of the Session



Over 80 participants drawn from senior level government officials, reputable Policy Think Tanks, Civil Society organisations (CSOs) and international development stakeholders who attended the discourse participated in the polls. In responding to the first survey conducted before the kick-off of the session, 69.2 per cent of participants voted for states in Nigeria to have their own police, while 11.5 per cent voted otherwise and 19.2 per cent of the participants were undecided.

The second polls conducted shows the lack of clear-cut stance on the issue of State Police/policing in Nigeria. Opinions tend to change given the intricacy of the issue. There was a dramatic shift from the opinions obtained from the initial polls. Participants that voted for States to have their own police reduced from 69.2 per cent to 33.3 per cent. 47.2 per cent of the participants voted against State Police/Policing in Nigeria while 19.4 per cent remained undecided.

Development Discourse is a platform for reform-minded professionals at the highest levels of policy development and programme implementation to engage in rigorous dialogue and issues resolution with the overriding goal of advancing Nigeria's development. This Nextier initiative aims to build a policy community focused on promoting evidence-informed policy in government.