



## STATE SECURITY APPARATUS AND EMERGENCE OF REGIONAL ARMED SECURITY ARCHITECTURE IN NIGERIA (2015-2021)

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**ABSTRACT:** *The emergence and proliferation of non-state armed security outfits across different geopolitical zones in Nigeria in recent times is on the rise. Scholars have argued on the causes, necessity and legality of these regional security outfits. However, studies have not empirically examined the character of Nigeria state as the propelling factor for the increase in these armed security outfits. This study, therefore, examined whether the weak governance of security by the Federal Government accounted for the emergence and proliferation of people centered non-state armed security architecture in Nigeria. The study adopted the documentary method of data collection, which was then analyzed through qualitative descriptive methods of data analysis. The Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT) was utilized as the foundation for our theoretical framework. Findings showed that weak governance of security by the federal government contributed to the emergence and proliferation of people centered non-state armed security outfits in Nigeria within the period under study. As a corollary of the above, this study recommended building synergy and collaboration between the state security agencies and the regional security outfits which will strengthen intelligence gathering and effective security provision.*

**KEYWORDS:** Neighborhood Watch, Regional Security Architecture, Security, The State.



## INTRODUCTION

The inundation of terrorism, armed banditry, and violent extremism, among others has become a perturbing issue in Nigeria. The incessant attacks with kidnappings of both Nigerians and foreign nationals and high rate of murders that remain un-investigated most of the time when the victims are low-profile citizens are reminiscent of the rise of serious crimes that are impeding the survival and socioeconomic development of Nigeria. Unfortunately, the response of the Federal Government in all these security challenges appears to be reactionary, repressive and bereft of inclusiveness. Sustainable peace therefore becomes elusive.

Long before the advent of colonialism in Nigeria in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, the diverse indigenous societies had developed a number of organizations for preserving peace. However, as the colonial state and all of its coercive apparatus came into existence, these historical institutions of public order management that had long served the people were cast aside as the modern police force, which was commanded by the colonial authorities, took their place as the primary security organization in the colony's internal security architecture (Ahire, 1991:18).

Before the development of modern police, there were Ndi nche groups in the eastern region of Nigeria (community guards). They were established by the locals to apprehend suspected criminals and bring them before the "Amala" (village council) for trials. In actuality, Ndi nche, along with the "Olodes" (Hunter Guild) and the "Yan Banga" in the western and northern sections respectively, oversaw public order management in the various domains for centuries (Ogbozor, 2016). This implies that community policing and informal security had existed before the arrival of the first European settlers, but only in recent years have they multiplied and become more involved in the security situation in Nigeria. Non-state security groups such as vigilante, neighborhood watch, community guard, civilian joint task force, hunters' association, Forest Guard, and other private security organizations were established as auxiliary outfits to complement the state security agencies, to help secure lives and property in rural communities under the watchful eyes of the law.

In the 1970s, as a result of the arms and weapons left in the hands of non-state actors, which was a result of the Nigerian civil war, armed robbery and other related crimes skyrocketed, leading to an increase in the number of neighborhood watches and security organizations (Basiru & Osunkoya, 2019). In 1986, in an effort to rehabilitate the battered image of the Nigerian Police Force, the Federal Military Government of Nigeria, through its representatives at the state level, legally incorporated vigilante organizations into the country's police system (Basiru & Osunkoya, 2019). In support of these local security networks, Prof. Itse Sagay (SAN), head of the Presidential Advisory Committee Against Corruption (PACAC), opined that it is unwise for the entire nation to rely solely on the federal government for security, and that local initiative should be emphasized instead (cited in Odewale & Lamidi, 2020).

Nonetheless, as the country advanced politically, socially, and economically, it was also confronted with a multitude of violent crimes, some of which constituted severe dangers to the country's survival (Ukpere, 2012). Regrettably, despite the continuous supply of funds from the federal, state, and local governments, it appears that the Nigeria Police Force, the formal policing organization, has achieved only minimal results in response to these challenges. More recently, the persistent security threat in the country, with the state security



agencies clearly overburdened by the unprecedented security challenges confronting the nation, particularly the activities of the Fulani herdsmen, banditry, kidnapping, and others in the southern part of Nigeria, has prompted the states within the region to resort to self-help by establishing security architectures to protect lives and property in the region.

Thus, regional security architectures evolved and proliferated in response to the apparent inability of state security services to protect and safeguard the lives and property of residents. For instance, Western Nigeria Security Network (WNSN) operation Amotekun, was launched on January 9, 2020 in Ibadan, Oyo state, by the six states of South Western Nigeria. This was followed by the foundation of the Eastern Security Network (ESN) on December 12, 2020 by Nnamdi Kanu, the leader of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB). On 11 April 2021, the five governors of the Southeast announced the formation of a regional security outfit called "Ebube Agu" to combat the region's deteriorating security condition. However, the federal government has opposed the formation of these security outfits and deemed them unconstitutional because they act counter to the Nigerian constitution (Okodolor, 2019).

Meanwhile, there exists a sizable volume of literature accounting for the causes of the emergence and proliferation of regional security architecture. Most of these studies link the cause to the complicity of the Nigerian government, the administration's cavalier attitude towards the security provisions of the constitution, corruption, and the politicization of the system (Ugwueze, Ugwu & Omeje, 2018; Odewale & Lamidi, 2020; Ogbosor, 2016). However, the existing research has not empirically examined the character of Nigeria state and the proliferation of regional security architecture.

Therefore, the documentation of Nigerian state and the proliferation of regional security architecture is not only apt and essential but also provides insight into why non-state security actors have continued to increase despite all measures by the federal government to mitigate them. Therefore, this study is an attempt to examine the character of Nigeria state as the propelling factor to the proliferation of regional security architecture between 2015 -2021.

### **Theoretical Framework**

There exists immense writings on the state and proliferation of regional security outfits. The majority of these works are premised on the compromised standards and ineffectiveness of state security services according to political behaviorism and structural functionalism. As a result of the inadequacy of existing theories to appropriately address the state and proliferation of regional security architecture in Nigeria, we question their analytical value and usefulness as a basis for comprehending and explaining the topic under study.

Consequently, this study utilized the Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT) propounded by Buzan and Waever (2003). The theory was further improved on in their work: "Region and Power: the Organization of International Security". Buzan and Waever (2003) understood the regional security complex as a collection of units whose significant securitization, de- securitization, or both processes are sufficiently intertwined that their security challenges cannot be examined or resolved independently.

Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT) provides a theoretical and conceptual framework for comprehending the emergence of international security's structure and dynamics (Buzan & Waever, 2003, p. 44). It also theorizes the historical dynamics and continuities that distinguish pre-Cold War (before 1945), Cold War (1945–1989/90), and post-Cold War (after



1990) global transformations, with implications for regionalism and regionalization. The theory has constructivist origins and emphasizes that the emergence of regional security complexes is impacted by patterns of amity and hostility among international system elements (Buzan & Waever, 2003). Conflict and cooperation are contingent on the behaviors and perceptions of players as well as power relationships. RSCT was developed to advance the boundaries of knowledge about the interplay of intermediate level security relations between national and global security.

### **Basic Assumptions of Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT)**

Nation is both the subject and object of security. Global security is merely an aspiration, unattainable, and frequently a delusion. This is because global security depends on the architecture of international law and order, which is difficult to execute and adjudicate compared to local or regional order. The actions and objectives of international security actors are mainly regional in nature. National security is interconnected rather than an isolated phenomenon.

Perhaps, the most important aspect of the RSCT for us is the assumption that national security is interconnected rather than isolated. Based on this assumption, security concerns are mostly regional in character. The implication is that national security cannot be effectively handled by the state alone. Inferring from the above, we conclude that participants within the same security complex ought to rely on one another to build a formidable force capable of repelling attacks. Hence, an analyst can apply the theory of regional security complex theory to justify the emergence and proliferation of regional security architecture.

### **Application of the Theory**

In applying the theory to this study, we observed that the federal government has exclusive authority and statutory duty for issues pertaining to the security and welfare of the citizens. However, the Nigerian government's seeming inability to protect lives and property in various states of the federation led to the emergence and proliferation of regional security architecture in many of those states. In Nigeria, it has been observed that regions have distinct insecurity complexes. For instance, Boko Haram has been one of the major security challenges in northern Nigeria, particularly the north-east, with its continuous and unabated attacks on innocent Nigerians, which have claimed lots of lives and destabilized socioeconomic activities in the region since 2009 (Onuoha, Nwangwu & Ugwueze, 2020).

Similarly, there have been attacks of Fulani herdsmen, banditry, kidnapping, unknown armed criminal gang, and other security issues in the southeast and southwest regions. Regrettably, the Nigerian police and other security forces appear to have a subpar response to these security concerns. Since there is a high level of security concern among members of a given security complex (Buzan, 2003), interdependence between states positioned in a geographically coherent group has become a necessity, as is the case in Nigeria today with the establishment of formidable security outfits in various regions. In addition, it is easier for threats to traverse small distances than long ones; hence security interdependence clusters are geographically based. In relation to this, insecurity is frequently related with closeness, which necessitates regional interdependence if it is to be addressed.

Finally, security is a complex phenomenon that requires collaboration, interconnectedness and interdependence if it must be achieved. Therefore, from the foregoing, the regional



security complex theory has analytic prowess in explaining the proliferation of regional security architectures in Nigeria.

## **Conceptual Clarification**

### **Neighborhood Watch**

A neighborhood watch is an organized group of persons (usually civilians), committed to the prevention of vandalism and crime within a defined neighborhood. The objectives of neighborhood watch in a community includes but not limited to enlightening local residents on security and safety practices; and establishing a safe and secure neighborhood. Usually, when there is a suspected criminal activity in the neighborhood, members are counseled to report to constituent authorities and not to engage. A neighborhood watch is different from a vigilante group in that they are typically the eyes of the community and are not expected to intervene in the event of any suspected criminal activity but to report to the authorities only.

- **Regional Security Architecture**

Regional security architecture refers to the collective, non-state centered armed security outfits operating at different geo-political zones at different levels in various states of the federation. It constitutes all operational security ventures within a state, local government or community, not directly constituted or controlled by the federal government. Regional security architecture sprang up and proliferated in different states, local governments and communities of the federation owing to perceived security lapses in those areas. Examples of regional security architecture include vigilante groups, neighborhood watch, Amotekun, Ebuibe Agu, and the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF), among others.

- **The State**

A state is a centralized political organization that imposes and enforces rules over a population within a territory. According to Weber (1946), a state is a human community that successfully claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory. The state is used in this study to refer to the Nigerian government. It is used interchangeably with the “federal government”, “the government’ and ‘nation”.

- **Security**

Security of lives and properties is through exclusive functions of government which permeates all strata of society (Iloh & Nwokedi, 2019). In regards to this, security defined by most of the mainstream writings as a state’s capabilities to protect life and properties as well as defend its territorial integrity from either actual or imagined threats through the country’s security apparatuses. As a corollary of the above, it is natural for people to be hostile in reacting to an issue or series of issues that upset or threaten their normal way of living. In the same vein, Sutherland and Cressey (1978) argued that the survival of any society is its law and order which are predicated on national security.

Therefore, we use security to mean the ability of state security mechanisms, which involve state and non-state actors, to prevent and/or manage anxiety, uncertainty and harm that has the capacity to distort serenity and development (Aleyomi & Nwagwu, 2020).



- Vigilante Group

According to the Thesaurus Dictionary, the word “vigilante” entered English in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, having been borrowed from the Spanish word of the same spelling, which meant “watchman” or “guard” in Spanish. The earliest use of the word in English was to refer to a member of “vigilance committee”; a committee formed to suppress and punish crime when the process of the law appeared inadequate. In a much broader sense, it sometimes carries the suggestion of the enforcement of the law without regard to due process or the general rule of law.

Similarly, for Bateson (2022) vigilantism is the act of preventing, investigating and punishing perceived offenses and crimes without legal authority. He went on to say that vigilantism is the “extra-legal prevention, investigation or punishment of offenses”p.12. Other scholars such as Cohen (2022), Michael (2022), and Weintraub (2022) understood vigilantism as a group action set up to punish perceived offenses to a community. All conceptions of vigilantism above are accurate for the study.

Baker (2003) opined that a vigilante group is a group of committed people at the micro level of the community, set up to collate information on suspected criminals in its area, for use by the police in the detection and prevention of crime.

### **Exclusion of Community Members in Security Provisioning and Proliferation of Vigilante Groups**

The police are tasked by law to protect lives and serve the public’s interest, liberty, equality and justice. Nevertheless, it has been observed that members of the local communities and civil societies are excluded in the security provisioning and this has remained one of the major constraints of Nigeria's security governance as many police personnel are so enmeshed with conventional law enforcement measures (Kasali, & Odetola, 2016). The heterogeneous nature of Nigeria state requires collaboration and cooperation of security agencies and other sectors in carrying out their duty of crime prevention and control in the community. Unfortunately, the federal government has monopolized the management of security and has failed to acknowledge the necessity in collaborating with the public and members of local communities.

The state security agencies have been struggling to serve the people better but most police operations were structured and carried out without much input from the people within the local communities. Because the members of the communities were often excluded from the security provisions, the federal government most times is bereft of the security needs of the communities. Furthermore, so many communities have different expectations, beliefs, norms and unique security challenges. Consequently, it would be difficult to identify and follow up these expectations and norms as required without the help of the community members. The limited knowledge, language, culture, information and needs of the local people tend to hinder the prompt and effective response of the state security agencies.

Generally, the federal government is usually not well informed or has limited knowledge about the local needs and often restrained by the constitution in security provisioning, and its universal approach tends not to respond to local preferences (Oates, 1999). In addition to this, the state security personnel are estranged from the people. State security agencies exist only for the government rather than the people they are to serve and protect. There is basically no



rapport or association between security agencies and the local communities; and in most cases the attitude of the security agencies is not people's centered (Egboosiuba, 2013). There is little or no trust between the communities and state security agencies. The community members do not have the confidence that the security officers will protect them even if an intelligence is being given to them. Most times, police stations are mainly situated in the towns or cities at the barring and deleterious of the rural areas (Arisukwu, 2014).

Consequently, the availability and accessibility of assistance of state security agencies in exigency and crisis situations is nearly impossible in most remote areas. In an attempt to salvage this situation, most communities and states took security in their own hands and various security groups were formed by the people to address the security challenges peculiar to their environment.

Recently, the federal government acknowledged the essentiality of vigilante groups in addressing issues of security concern. This could be the propelling factor behind the inauguration of the Vigilante Group of Nigeria on April 27, 2004 by the former president late Umaru Yar'Adua (Obeagu, 2014). The Vigilante Group of Nigeria was inaugurated to complement the services of the state security agencies in curbing crimes and maintenance of public order. However, its proliferation is as result of the inability of the state security agencies to provide maximum security to the people especially at the level of the rural communities (Baker, 2002). Different vigilante groups emerged and proliferated in various communities, to fill the gap in profound security lapses within the communities. Thus, creating a situation where there are so many unregistered vigilante groups. Several states, groups, and communities across Nigeria depend on the local vigilante for security provisioning against the spiraling insecurity and lack of trust in state security institutions. The vigilante group operates mostly at the community level where policing by the formal state security agencies is deficient or not in existence. Below is a tabular list of states in Nigeria with active vigilante services.

**Table 1. States with Active Vigilante Services**

S/N	States	Local Name	Areas of their operations
1	Abia	Abia State Vigilante Group	All Local Governments
2	Adamawa	Vigilante Group Adamawa State	Urban Areas
3	Akwa Ibom	Mboho Mme Ette Idung Ke Akwa Ibom	Akwa Ibom
4	Anambra	Anambra State Vigilante Service	All Local Governments
5	Bayelsa	Egbesu Boys of Africa	Rural Communities
6	Bauchi	Sarasuka	All Local Governments
7	Benue	Vigilante Group of Nigeria	All Local Governments
8	Borno	Borno Youth Empowerment Scheme (BOYES)	All Local Governments
9	Delta	Niger Delta Vigilante	All Local Governments
10	Edo	Edo State Integrated Vigilante	All Local Governments



11	Ekiti	Ekiti State Vigilante Group	All Local Governments
12	Gombe	Gombe Vigilante Group	All Local Governments
13	Imo	Imo Security Watch	Rural Community
14	Jigawa	Jigawa State Vigilante	All Local Governments
15	Kaduna	Mammal Da For a	All Local Governments
16	Katsina	Pro Government Vigilante Group	All Local Governments
17	Kebbi	Yansaki	Rural Communities
18	Kogi	Enyidudu Community Watch	All Local Governments
19	Kwara	Vigilante Group of Nigeria	All Local Governments
20	Nasarawa	Nasarawa State Youth Empowerment Scheme (NSYES)	All Local Governments
21	Niger	Niger State Vigilante Corps	All Local Governments
22	Ogun	Vigilante Service of Ogun State	All Local Governments
23	Ondo	Vigilante Group of Nigeria	Rural Communities
24	Osun	Harmonized Vigilante Group	Rural Communities
25	Oyo	Yoruba K'OYA Movement	All Local Governments
26	Plateau	Vigilante Group of Nigeria	All Local Governments
27	Sokoto	Yan Sakai	All Local Governments
28	Taraba	Taraba State Vigilante	All Local Governments
29	Yobe	Youth Vigilante Group	All Local Governments
30	Zamfara	Zamfara State Vigilante Service	All Local Governments

*Source: Compiled by the researchers from data gathered throughout the course of the study*

The table above represents the states with active vigilante groups. The researchers are aware that the list may not have captured the actual figures because there are many community vigilante groups that are not registered or recognized but are in existence and functional. Currently, most states have more than one vigilante group in operation both at the state and local level. For instance, Oyo state has vigilante groups such as Yoruba K'OYA movement, Oodua People's Congress, and Vigilante Group of Nigeria. Similarly, in Gombe state, there is Gombe Vigilante Group, Hunters Association and Kalare youth; while in Plateau state, Operation Rainbow, Vigilante Group of Nigeria, Neighbourhood Watch and Yan Banga (Night Watch) are functional in the state (Ogbonnaya, 2020). However, these vigilante groups are actively involved in the security provisioning in these states and local governments. For instance, Bauchi is one of the states in the north-east zone that has been





struggling with some security challenges such as banditry, cattle rustling, robbery, kidnapping among others. Recently, the security situation exacerbated because of the activities of Boko Haram terrorists especially around the Burra Forest in Ningi local government area. The Boko Haram insurgents continuously settle and reside in the Burra Forest because the forest is a huge one and extends to other states like Kano and Plateau. They launched attacks to other neighboring states and communities from this dense forest. Often times the residents of the community suffer robbery, rape and kidnapping perpetrated by the terrorist who take refuge in the Burra forest. Individuals who were abducted by these insurgents paid a ransom of about 3-5 million for their release (Yusuf, 2020).

In response to this mayhem, a new police division was stationed in Burra community but they were inept to expunge the terrorists from the forest because they were not familiar with the environment and lacked the good intelligence of the terrain (Makanjuola & Bukar, 2017). The inability of the police to intercept and apprehend the terrorist led to the formation of the Sarasuka vigilante group of Bauchi (Makanjuola & Bukar, 2017). The group invaded the forest and despoiled the entire terrorists that hid in the forest. According to Makanjuola and Bukar (2017), the Sarasuka group is passionate in sustaining equity and integrity, protecting and safeguarding their communities. They engage in both day and night patrols to discover criminals who are later handed over to security agents. Similarly, the vigilante group is also very active in Kano state. Their existence and activities cover the whole local government areas and rural areas of the state (Kura, 2017).

Likewise, the Jigawa vigilante group of Nigeria provides some security services such as crime control and arrest of criminals. They cooperate and collaborate with the police and other law enforcement agencies in preventing criminal activities, protecting public properties and conducting joint patrols (Kura, 2017). The vigilante groups make significant contributions to security provisioning as well as address the rapid increase of criminal and violent activities. In Ogun state, vigilante groups are also viable tools in security provisioning. Prior to the emergence of the Ogun state, vigilante group there has been a group known as "Ode Agbegbe Neighborhood". However, in 2008, Ogun state formally joined the vigilante group of Nigeria for more vigorous and effective security provisioning and the Ogun State Vigilante Group came into existence (Aboderin & Okenyodo, 2017). They go on surveillance and aid in invading the area where the police personnel cannot reach. In some of their patrols, they apprehend suspects, which they hand over to the police immediately for more investigations (Aboderin & Okenyodo, 2017).

Similarly, the Anambra state vigilante group has been in operation since 2002 and the activities and the operations of this group is backed by the Anambra state vigilante group law enacted in 2004 by the state house of assembly (Umeobika, 2012). This group serves as the eyes of the state security agencies in their various communities and their proximity to the people in the community is crucial in curbing crimes. Most of the members of the vigilante group live in the communities where they operate and as such are accustomed and closer to the community members and locality. Their nimble and prompt response to the crime scene prior to the arrival of the police is highly commendable. They walk through the streets and villages at all times to maintain security in the relevant places. Because of their proximity to the people, they are apprised of every activity going on in the community expeditiously upon which they intervene in any matter that may give rise to crisis or insecurity immediately (Umeobika, 2012).



Their surveillance measure has restrained individuals who plan to commit crime and structures that are used for illegitimate things are discovered and destroyed. They also engage in preserving law and order in their communities through resolving disputes, guaranteeing peace and order during various communal events in the community and protecting people's properties thus minimizing the rate at which people lose their vital items during funerals, marriage, festivals, among others. Some of the members of the vigilante groups are situated at the intersection of the streets, villages and communities in order to discover and arrest criminals' entering the community. They collaborate and communicate with community members to obtain and access appropriate information. (Ugwu, 2020). From the foregoing, it has been established that the lack of cooperation between state security agencies and community members has remained one of the reasons for the inability of the state to address the growing security challenges bedeviling Nigeria especially in the rural areas, thus leading to the proliferation of vigilante groups across different states. Until the state security agencies acknowledge the fact that without liaising with the locals, addressing insecurity will be a near impossible task, then, the people will form the focal point of their services within the states and communities.

### **Inadequacy of Conventional Strategy and Multiplication of Neighbourhood Watch**

Nigeria has experienced an unusual surge of violent conflicts, insurgency, terrorism and other criminal activities. In all these security challenges, the government's proclivity has always been deployment of conventional security agents and measures, a strategy that has proved unproductive so far. The federal government's reliance on the police and other paramilitary institutions in addressing these security challenges has proven inadequate. This has led to an increase in the deployment of the military to complement the efforts of other security agencies. Yet, the military and other security agencies still have problems coping with the intense security environment.

The inadequacy of the conventional security agencies and their measures in tackling the security challenges in Nigeria underpinned an increase in the emergence and multiplication of neighborhood watch. Neighborhood watch has been established in many states to assist the state security agencies in providing security especially at the grass root level. Below is a tabular representation of states with neighborhood watch in Nigeria in the period under study.

**Table 2 States Multiplication of Security Outfits**

<b>STATES</b>	<b>SECURITY OUTFITS</b>	<b>SPONSOR</b>
Enugu	Enugu State Neighborhood Association and Watch Group	Enugu State Government
	Forest Guard	Enugu State Government
Ebonyi	Ebonyi State Neighborhood Association and Watch Group	Ebonyi State Government
	Community Vigilante	Host Community



Rivers	Neighborhood Safety Agency of The Rivers State Government	River State Government
Lagos	Lagos Neighborhood Safety Corps	Lagos State Government
Benue	Neighborhood Watch	Local Communities
	Civilian Joint Task Force	Benue State Government
Gombe	Kalere Neighborhood Watch	Local Government
	Hunters Association	Self –Sponsored
Plateau	Neighborhood Watch	Local Communities
	Yan Banga	Local Communities
Yobe	Civilian Joint Task Force	Yobe State Government
	Youth Community Vigilante	Local Communities
	Hunter Association	Self-Sponsored
	Kandira Community Police	Local Communities
Nasarawa	Neighborhood Watch	Local Communities
Adamawa	Neighborhood Watch	Local Governments
	Civilian Joint Task Force	Adamawa State Government
	Hunters Association	Host Communities

Source: Ogbonnaya (2020), edited by the researchers

From the above, it has been established that many states have multiple indigenous security outfits including the vigilante services.

Neighbourhood Watch security outfits exist to complement the state actors for effective security provision. They use locally manufactured weapons such as AK47 and machetes in their operations. The Ebonyi State Neighbourhood Watch has been in existence since 2015 but was passed into law by the State Government as a response to the spate of insecurity in the state especially the invasion and attacks by the Fulani herdsmen (Agwu, 2023). It was established to offer security services in different communities and also guard the community properties such as electric transformers, street lights, schools and hospital equipment, pipe borne water, among others. Members of these security outfits also provide intelligence to the Police. It was intelligence provided by this group that assisted the Police in apprehending an alleged murderer in Ezza North Local government area in June, 2016 and also stopped an attempted kidnap in Akaeze in December, 2016 (Ogbonnaya, 2017). They sensitize and hearten residents of the local communities to report any suspicious persons or activities



within their environment.

In the same vein, Enugu State Neighbourhood Watch was established in 2015 and put on duty in different communities and wards to ensure the security and safety of lives and properties in the state. They are stationed in some of the lonely roads such as Nsukka- Adanni road, Nsukka-Obimo road, Nsukka-Kogi road, among others. In Nsukka and Uzo Uwani, Enugu State Neighborhood Watch played a significant role in screening of tenants who wish to reside within the communities. They also settle domestic and minor issues such as land disputes between and among communities and community members within their areas of operations. With the aid of intelligence given by the members of Neighbourhood Watch, alleged criminals breaking in people's shops along Gariki, Awkunanaw area were apprehended by the police (Odigwe, 2021).

Lagos state is a commercial area with a dense and diverse population as well as a hotbed of criminal activities and other civil offenses, which have overwhelmed the state security personnel. Hence, the Lagos State Neighborhood Safety Agency was established in 2016 to assist the federal security agencies in tackling the insecurity in the state. The members of this security outfit perform the following functions:

- Obtaining intelligent and relevant information about crimes and other suspicious activities.
- Establishment of measures to ensure that hoodlum does not have the chance to attack. Regular patrols especially at nights.
- Arresting of criminals and handing them over to the police for trials and persecution (Lagos State Security Trust Fund, 2020).

Lagos state neighborhood safety corps in collaboration with state security agencies have identified criminals' hideouts and strategically mapped out measures to effectively manage internal security of the state (Lagos State Security Trust Fund, 2020).

In Plateau state, the presence and works of neighborhood watch is highly recognized as they work hand in hand with the state police command to ensure security of lives and properties in the state. Plateau State Neighbourhood Watch is a small group of people that have taken responsibility for securing their immediate environment against baneful interlopers and other criminal activities. They sensitize community members and dishearten religious discrimination and seclusion thereby reducing the level of ethno-religious conflicts in the state. They have to some extent restore peace and unity among different communities such as in Dutse/Uku. The work of this security is greatly felt in some interior parts of Plateau such as Zaramaganda, Dadin Kowa, Bukuru, Izeen elite Rayfield and among others (Okokah et al., 2021).

In Zaramaganda community in Jos South Local Government Area, the members of neighborhood watch placed blocks on the Rayfield road down to the community and searched every vehicle going in or out of the community in order to ensure that nobody enters the community with any dangerous weapon or leaves with valuable items. They also stationed themselves at the three major entrances in Gura-loh-Gyang community for surveillance and security of the community members. The members of this security outfit patrolling along Rukuba, Angwan Rukuba and Bauchi Road intervened when they witnessed strange



movements along that road before the arrival of state security personnel and this has reduced the number of casualties in Terminus Jos bomb blast (Okokah et al., 2021).

The Plateau State Neighbourhood Watch in collaboration with Operation Rainbow have succeeded in wading off the activities of the criminals, Fulani herdsmen, restive youth, mitigating crimes and maintaining relative peace and unity in the state. The synergy and collaboration between the Neighbourhood Watch and Operation Rainbow has yielded a laudable result especially in the are Of early warning, prompt response in crime scenes as well as sufficient manpower for deployment in time of emergency or crisis (Kwaja, 2017).

Neighbourhood Watch as people's centered non-security outfits has sensitized and enabled citizens and communities to be active and prepared in time of crisis and emergency including fight against crime and community clash. Odigwe (2021) asserted that crime has reduced to 16% since the establishment of Enugu state Neighbourhood Watch.

## CONCLUSION

This study examined weak government security apparatus and emergence and proliferation of regional security outfits in Nigeria, 2015-2021. More specifically, the study attempted to show that weak governance of security by the federal government accounted for the emergence of people centered non-state armed security outfits in Nigeria within the period under review. The study established that the reactionary measures by the federal government, and non-inclusion of regional security outfits in the security sector, hindered effective tackling of the upsurge of insecurity in Nigeria. Hence, people centered non-state armed security outfits became an imperative and effective tool in addressing security challenges in Nigeria, in such a manner that is suggestive of the fact the Nigerian state has failed in matters of security. The solution lies in building synergy and collaboration between the state security agencies and the regional security outfits which will strengthen intelligence gathering and effective security provision. Furthermore, the federal government should democratize security governance and as well establish a central law that will regulate and control the activities of non-state armed security outfits.

Whether the federal government will, in the future, decentralize security powers such that states in Nigeria will be given the autonomy to cater for their unique security needs and challenges remains to be seen. For now, however, regional security outfits in various states of the nation have become indispensable and formidable, playing crucial security roles in their areas of operation. Until the federal government steps up its game in the effective tackling and management of security issues in the country, it is unlikely that we will see an end to people centered non-state armed security outfits any time soon, especially in rural communities.



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