

Criminal Intelligence Management and Joint Security Operations in Benue State: Taming the Interagency Collaboration Debacle

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Abstract: This study examined criminal intelligence management, joint security operations and the challenges of taming inter-agency collaboration debacle in Benue State, North Central Nigeria. The study adopted the qualitative method, semi-structured Key Information Interview (KII) technique and review of relevant literature in its investigations. Based on its earlier findings, the following conclusions were reached by the study. A sample size of 23 (n-23) was determined for the study. The interview participants were recruited using the referral approach that was based on the purposive sampling technique of selecting persons with enough stock of knowledge, experience, and expertise on the topic of this study. The participants were recruited from the Nigeria Police, DSS, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, vigilante group, and, of course, the special Joint Tasks Force Operation Whirl Stroke (OPWS) fighting various kinds of crime in Benue State, particularly armed robbery, banditry, kidnapping, herders attacks, farmers-herdsmen clashes, and cattle rustling. Findings of this study showed that factors such as superiority complex, and lack of regular interaction, and ignorance about the individual complementary role of sister security agencies featured as the major factors responsible for lack of inter-agency collaboration towards exchange of raw information among the various security agencies that undertake joint security operations against criminals. The study also found that duplication of functions that often leads to jurisdictional conflicts, lack of training or education coupled with dearth of intelligence analysts, and pecuniary interest were identified as specific factors that militate against inter-agency collaboration in the production/analysis of criminal intelligence for use in joint security operations. Results of the study also showed that weak leadership on the part of both political leaders and heads of security

agencies, and envy or jealousy over-perceived exclusive job assignments were identified as the main factors that militate against inter-agency sharing of criminal intelligence among security agencies in the country. Finally, this study proffered the following recommendations. It is recommended that both the operational and governance structures of the individual security agencies in Nigeria be reformed. The reform being proposed here should aim at removing any wasteful overlaps and unnecessary duplications of duties, mutual distrust and jurisdictional conflicts that arise through encroachment on each other's legal and operational spaces by the competing agencies. The reform here should also aim at ensuring that the duties of the agencies are properly streamlined such that information, criminal intelligence, and experience can be shared without eroding any individual mandates. Again, the study also recommended regular training programme on the modern approach to security operation known as intelligence-led counter terrorism (ILCT) should be organized jointly for the personnel of all the security agencies in Nigeria. As part of this training programme, it should also be ensured that the curriculum for such periodic training gives pride of place to such topics like Inter-agency collaboration (IAC) and criminal Intelligence Management (CIM).

Keywords: intelligence, crime, criminal, management, security, inter-agency, collaboration, sharing, agencies, joint, operation.

Introduction

Background to the Study

Since 1999 Nigeria returned to democratic rule till date, the country has come under the severe burden of so many different types of security threats, with six of them being deadliest extremist jihadist insurgency (typified by the Boko Haram terrorist conflicts), farmers-herdsmen clashes, armed banditry and kidnapping, separatist or secessionist insurgency (typified by Biafran agitators, oil-bunkering militancy, and cattle rustling (Tanko, 2021; Adzande, 2010; ICG, 2018; Hazen & Horner, 2007; Ene & Onyishi, 2011; Rotberg, 2007). This is outside the burden of such routine common criminal acts like rape burglary, theft, assault, armed robbery, and fraud among other acts of petty criminal victimization that take place on daily basis in various nooks and cranny across the country. The consequences of the foregoing, include death, and injury to several thousands of innocent Nigerians, destruction of property valued into millions of naira, and displacement of millions of persons away from their home communities (Tanko, 2021; NEMA, 2018; UNDP, 2018; IOM, 2020).

One of the States worst affected by the foregoing deadly security threats in Nigeria is Benue State, located in the centre of the country in the North central region, and reputed to be one of food-baskets of the country. Aside of those petty criminal victimizations, Benue State has since been under the siege of three fearsome security threats; famers-herdsmen clashes, cattle rustling, armed banditry and kidnapping (Ejekwonyilo, 2021; Ojewale, 2021; ICG, 2018), with the herders attacks beings

the deadliest of all. In the said clashes, an army of armed herders would attack an unsuspecting community, kill several thousands of the inhabitants, sack those who are lucky to have survived, and burn down their houses and property. For instance in 2016 and 2018, such densely populated communities and ever busy markets like Agatu, Ugbo and Aga markets, among several others were attacked, with over 500 persons killed in each of the attacks. As the clashes escalated between 2017 and 2018, the Benue State Government was compelled to enact the Open-Grazing Prohibition Law, 2017, and as part of its enforcement efforts created Livestock Guards (Ejekwonyilo, 2021). The pastoralists, on the other hand, were alleged to have rejected the law on grounds of its being overbearing and draconian on their own side, and in response had continued to allow their cattle stray into peoples' farmlands uncontrolled. This stalemate had continued to trigger larger-scale attacks by armed herders on the farming communities up till this day (Ojewale, 2020; Ejekwonyilo, 2021; ICG, 2018).

These challenges indicate that the law enforcement and security agencies are yet to meet the expectations for quality service delivery, particularly in preventing crime, attacks and the activities of extremists, as well as being more pragmatic and innovation in response to numerous challenges posed by this problem to public safety and security in Nigeria. Various factors have been implicated as being responsible for the ineffective law enforcement and efficient maintenance of law and order in Nigeria by the nation's police force and other security agencies. These factors which shall be discussed later in this study could be categorized into structural and institutional in nature. Today, these factors appear to have grown into a gangrene monster that is seemingly difficult to tame, leaving to the present ever-increasing wave of insecurity across the country.

This rising and seemingly intractable wave of insecurity compounded as it is today, by very strange forms of criminality poses three urgent challenges. First, the situation requires proactive measures rather than the very reactive approach (scornfully and, pejoratively dubbed "*wee dem*" by the lay public in Nigeria) (Chukwuma, 2015:9). This approach has been adopted by the law enforcement agencies in the country particularly the police as its traditional policing model since 1930 the force was established (Chukwuma, 2015; Ojukwu, 2018: 125).

For instance, the Nigeria police force whose primary statutory mandate is to provide internal security by way of maintenance of law and order and protection of public safety appear to be hamstrung for decades starting from the end of the Nigeria-Biafra civil war in early 1970 till date, as a consequence of poor funding, ill-trained and poorly motivated personnel, and systematic corruption (Alemika, 2012; Chukwuma, 2015; Angwe, 2012, Ojukwu, 2018).

Put differently, preventing or combating these crimes require not only acquisition of dense intelligence information and evidence, but also effective and efficient management

of such data from systematic collection, production/analysis, dissemination/re-evaluation, to utilization both at the tactical and strategic levels (Angwe, 2015; Docobo, 2005). Secondly, given the present sorry state of the Nigerian police vis-à-vis the growing sophistication, complexity, and rapidity of crime in the Nigerian society, fighting crime in the country calls for enlistment of the services of a sister security agency (ies) with superior strength in terms of personnel, arms and ammunition, tactics and professional expertise. Thirdly, acquisition of intelligence and evidence for use in combating these crime does not require not only unilateral efforts or exertions, but also dynamic multi-party engagement and partnership and inter-agency collaboration among sister security agencies as well as between law enforcement or security agencies, on one hand, and critical non-state or non-law enforcement stakeholders, on the other hand (Ratcliffe&Lowenthal, 2003; Amaechina, 2015; Hutton, 2009; Chukwuma, 2015).

Perhaps in response to the forgoing and following the footsteps of the Benue State Government, the Federal Government in February 2018 established its first joint security taskforce codenamed Operation Ayem Akpokuna with the mandate to tackle the rising wave of armed herdsmen attacks, farmers-herders clashes, cattle rustling, kidnapping and armed banditry by local militia (Ogunleye, 2018; ICG, 2018). As the outfit claimed, it recorded some successes in the few security operations it undertook within the three months of its lifespan. In May 2018, the taskforce was disbanded, and in its place, another sister security taskforce named Operation Whirl Stroke (OPWS) was established with the same mandate (Olowolagba, 2029; Owodage, 2018; ICG, 2018). Worthy of note also is that these two security task forces comprised personnel of the Nigerian military (Army, Air force, and Navy), the Nigeria Police Force, DSS, and NSCDC), with a military general as its commander/head. From the 32 security offensive operations it undertook within the first year (2018) it came into being, Olowolagba (2022) reported that Operation Whirl Stroke (OPWS) has so far launched successful attacks in over 130 security parades against armed herdsmen, militia gangs, suspected bandits, and kidnapers in parts of Benue State as at December 2021.

In addition to the regular Nigeria Police Force, the DSS, State Government's Livestock Guards, and the various local community vigilante groups that are charged with the mandate of maintaining internal security across Benue State, there are, of course, a plethora of ancillary security outfits charged with such similar mandate whose presence are visible in the state. These ancillary security agencies that are expected to play complementary role to that played by the Nigerian police and DSS, among others include the following: the Nigeria Correctional Service (NCS), the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC), National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Vehicle Inspection Office

(VIO), Independent Corrupt Practices and other related Offences Commission (ICPC), Nigeria Customs Service (NCS), Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS), the Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB), the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), and the Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corp (NSCDC), among others.

The general expectations was that these security agencies would collaborate or work in synergistic cooperation among themselves both as autonomous bodies and in their joint security operations against threats to public safety and internal security in Nigeria. The foregoing was also corroborated by the views of many analysts, including Gbanite (2001), Odoma (2012), Alemika (2003); Omogui (2006) and Marizu (2007). This view was that in a situation whereby the various security agencies in Nigeria play their roles well, especially in mutual collaboration, cooperation or synergy with one another and amongst themselves as widely envisaged by society and the constitution, the rising wave of violent crimes and other threats to internal security would have been drastically stemmed. As ample evidence has shown, the contrary is the situation. For, rather than cooperate or collaborate among themselves, particularly in their joint security operations, the various security agencies in Nigeria have all these while engaged themselves in an orgy of unhealthy rivalry, inordinate superiority rivalry, mutual suspicion and distrust, muscle-flexing, power play, and grandstanding (Odoma, 2014; Omogui, 2006, Gbanite, 2001; Mbumega, & Anaele, 2019; Eme, 2020). Put differently, these security agencies instead of close ranks and work as a unit, choose to dissipate both human and material resources in supremacy rivalry occasioned by jurisdictional conflicts, personality clashes, and struggles for operational funds at the expense of sister agencies. The consequence of the foregoing is that in the very face of a plethora of security agencies, criminal threats to public safety and security have continued to escalate each passing day across most parts of Nigeria.

Against the backdrop of the foregoing, the mission of this study was to examine the challenges of criminal intelligence management and joint security operations in Benue State. The study, also focused on the impact and remedies to the lingering absence of inter-agency collaboration among security agencies fighting the rising wave of criminal threats to public safety and internal security in the area.

Statement of the Problem

The upsurge in crime in the North central region of Nigeria (Benue State inclusive), particularly farmers-herders conflicts, herdsmen attacks, cattle rustling, and armed banditry has become Nigeria's gravest security challenge. This rising repertoire of high crimes is estimated to be taking lives and destructions far more than the Boko Haram terrorist insurgency in North-East Nigeria. For instance, in one clash in 2018,

1,300 persons were killed, and over 300,000 displaced outside their homes. In fact, as at 2021, the Benue State Government reported that it had over 2 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) scattered and languishing under squalid conditions in various makeshift IDP camps across the State. In similar vein, many task force personnel were killed and costly military equipment, including military helicopters destroyed during occasional ambush and frontline confrontations with armed militia and marauding armed herdsmen.

Aside of the unfortunate killing of innocent persons, villages were sacked and houses, markets and public infrastructural facilities, including schools, health facilities, and government offices were destroyed. Majority of farmers in the area have all lost their means of livelihood as their farm- lands were either destroyed or taken over by herdsmen and their cattle who claim that such farmlands were their original grazing routes before the latter were taken over by the farmers as a consequence of socio-demographic pressure that has arisen from population expansion. As the Benue State Government and other well-meaning groups contend, what is happening in Benue State in particular and North Central Nigeria region in general is not just mere land-use contest between local farmers and herdsmen per se, but outright case of terrorist insurgency in which jihadist terrorists of the Boko Haram and ISWAP extractions in neighbouring Mali, Niger, Chad, Mauritania, Senegal, and Guinea are fighting to destabilize the region, sack sedentary local communities, take over their lands, and ultimately foist their Islamist governance and order in the area.

The point remains that apart from the regular law enforcement agencies led by the police and intelligence non-based DSS, there are other military, para-military and non-state formations that are also saddled with the mandate of playing complementary role in the maintenance of internal security and public safety in Nigeria. Investigations reveal that most of these security agencies and formations also have visible presence in Benue State. In addition, government had response to the escalation of the spate of crime in Benue State established two special joint task forces, the defunct Operation Ayem Akputuna, and the present Operation Whirl Stroke (OPWS) between February and May 2018. By and large, the general expectation was that these various security agencies in Benue State would forge a strong bond of relationships and partnership by way of-inter-agency cooperation and collaboration in the fight against the rising wave of criminal activities in the area. Specifically, it is accursedly expected that those agencies would from time to time engage in mutual sharing of intelligence information and material resource amongst themselves towards achieving effective fight against crime in the area. However and unfortunately, rather than cooperate and collaborate among themselves, the said security agencies decided to engage themselves in inordinate supremacy rivalry, mutual suspicion and distrust, and struggle for a large chunk of the

funding from government and development partners. The consequence of the foregoing has over-time found, expression in the rising wave of herder's attacks, farmers-herdsmen clashes, armed banditry, kidnapping, and cattle rustling among other forms of criminal act in the area.

Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research questions:

- (i) What are the factors responsible for the inability of security agencies to collaborate among themselves towards gathering intelligence information for use in their joint security operations?
- (ii) Which factors account for the inability of security agencies to share both human and material resources among themselves towards production of quality and credible criminal intelligence for use in their joint security operations?
- (iii) What are the factors that lead to inter-agency rivalry amongst security agencies that militate against their effective sharing/dissemination of criminal intelligence end-products amongst themselves for use in their joint security operations?

Research Methodology

As earlier hinted, this study is a qualitative research. Its methodology, therefore, comprised the qualitative research method and semi-structured Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) to capture elaborate and in-depth responses from participants, but flexible enough for in-depth probing and clarification of issues as they emerged (Gillham, 2000; Dan, 2012; Pritha, 2020; Ashley, 2020). The series of interview were conducted by this researcher and two Research Assistants, using semi-structured interview protocol, digital tape recorder and field journals.

Participant recruitment for the study was guided by an earlier established recruitment threshold ($t = 1-25$), which ultimately yielded a certain sample ($n=23$). Participant for the study were recruited from thirteen (13) security agencies that operate in the Benue State capital, Makurdi. They were: OPWS – 3, NPF – 3, DSS – 3, Army – 2, Navy – 1, and Air Force – 1. Others were community vigilante groups – 2, Benue Livestock Guards – 2, NDLEA -1, EFCC – 1, NSCDC -2, Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) – 1, and Nigerian Correctional Service (NCS) – 1. Participants were recruited through referrals and purposive sampling technique based on the stock of knowledge and experience in relation to the topic of the research (Marshall, 2014).

12 semi-structured interviews were conducted across parts of Benue State including Makurdi metropolis, Agatu, Logo, Katsina-Ala, and Kwande. The interviews which lasted between 37 and 65 mins each were conducted by this researcher in company of two (2) well trained research assistants, using digital tape recorder, interview protocol, and field journals. Simultaneous transcription of the recorded interviews also took place with the aid of member of computer software (NVivo II Theme Reader, Mind Manager, rilab's knowledge map, and Hart's Diction 5.0), where permissible throughout the interviews, confidentiality and anonymity of each interviewee as part of the requirements for granting approval for the interviews in the first place were ensured. A number of ethical challenges coming mostly from some overzealous participants, which if allowed would had adversely affected the credibility of the interview processes, were successfully overcome. Immediately after the data analysis exercise, both the recorded and transcribed copies of the interviews were put away into this researcher's private locker and secured against any possible intruder, waiting to be physically shredded or deleted in the computer two years after this research.

Trustworthiness and authenticity of data inquiry was established based on Lincoln & Guba's (1985) four criteria: credibility, transferability, conformability, and dependability. In particular, credibility of this research was also established using four key techniques: *prolonged engagement* with the participants in the field and in reading and re-reading the transcripts of the data, *peer-debriefing*, *triangulation*, and *member-checking* (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Krefting, 1981; Nowell, Naomis, White & Moules, 2017).

Data analysis for the study was carried out using *Thematic Analysis* approach, which utilizes a particular technique for identifying, analysing, organizing, describing and reporting 'themes' found within a data set (Brain & Clarke, 2006: 95; Nowel et al, 2017). The technique used in the thematic analysis using Lincoln & Guba (1985; 3 step model).

Results and Discussion

In this section, the results of the analysis of the thirteen (13) key informant interviews held with the 23 participants of this study are presented. The results are also briefly discussed. The presentations are, of course, done in line with the three research questions that provided the compass to this study.

What are the factors responsible for the inability of security agencies to collaborate among themselves towards gathering intelligence information for use in their joint security operations?

Theme: Intelligence Information and Evidence Gathering

An overwhelming majority of the participants identified lack of interaction among the personnel of the sister security agencies prior to their joint security operations as

the major factor that militated against the cooperation of the agencies in the task of gathering information and evidence towards effective joint security operations. As most the participants contended, this lack of constant interaction created very wide communication gaps among different security agencies and as a consequence, they were deprived of the opportunity to exchange vital intelligence information and evidence amongst themselves; and also the information about the workings, strengths, and weaknesses of the organization with regard to gathering of intelligence information on criminal activities. As one of the participants (IAC-08) stressed:

“As a soldier, it’s only the army work I know. I don’t know much about police or police work, their ranks, Civil Defence people or SSS. Even before I joined OPWS, we the Army people did have opportunity before to interact with people in the Police or SSS. Had it been we and they have one common officers Mess or joint training centre where we meet often, we can change information or intelligence, but we don’t have such now. Even when I was in my platoon in 103 Battalion Enugu from where I was posted to this OPWS, we never interacted much with any police unit or DSS or Civil Defence people. Due to this, we do not exchange much information or intelligence with any of them” (BKI-09)

The forgoing view by majority of the participants is supported by one of the opinions canvassed in the communiqué released in 2007 by the Military, Police and Paramilitary Public Relations Officers Forum (MILPPPPOF). According to the Forum (MILPPPPOF, 2007: 19), the clashes among various security agencies in Nigeria are “largely due to the dearth of information and interaction for a”. According to the Forum, this has made mostly the junior personnel of these security services wallow in ignorance about their complementary roles in enhancing security. Most instructively, the communication gap equally denies the junior personnel of these security agencies the awareness about the areas of mutual cooperation and exclusivity of roles. In support, Ekong (2007), therefore, blames the clashes on the absence of regular interaction amongst, mostly, the lower rank of these formal agencies of social control in Nigeria.

Majority of the participants also identified feeling of superiority by the personnel of one security agency against the personnel of other sister agencies as another key factor that militated against inter-agency collaboration among security agencies, particularly as it affected joint security operations. As the participants augured, the corollary to the foregoing was that while the personnel of the agency that usually harboured the feeling of being superior tended to look down on the personnel of their sister agencies, the latter, reaction tended to avoid the former as much as possible. The foregoing as a consequence created a big communication gap between the personnel of

the affected agencies and this denied them the very opportunity for free exchange or flow of intelligence information and evidence. As one key informant observed:

“Even when I was in vigilante group in Agatu, that is before I joined the present Benue Livestock Guards, we used to bring information to the OPWS Task force people or the police. The problem is that when we bring information on criminals to them, they rejected much of the information simply because they were coming from us. I heard one army guy tell his colleague ‘don’t believe or trust these bloody vigilante people; are you sure they are not criminals themselves’. Because they always feel superior, they looked down on us and the information we usually took to them, we decided not to take information to the Army or Police most of his time. Instead, we took such to the Governor’s office” and always saw them (the OPWS) people and police as not serious colleagues in the fight against herdsmen or other criminals” (BKI – 13).

The foregoing was amply corroborated by the earlier opinion by Mbumega & Anaele (2019:8), who in their earlier study found that “feeling of superiority by one security organization over other sister agencies” also featured as one of the ten factors they identified as being responsible for lack of cooperation among security agencies in Nigeria.

Which factors account for the inability of security agencies to share both human and material resources among themselves towards production of quality and credible criminal intelligence for use in their joint security operations?

A good majority of the interviewees also identified “duplication of function or roles” for the various security agencies as one major factor that militated against lack of cooperation or collaboration among security agencies in Nigeria, specifically with regard to intelligence analysis/production for use in their joint security operations. In the option of the participants, the factor of duplication of functions or roles oftentimes predisposes security agencies involved in joint operations against a given crime incident to work at cross purposes or in conflicting ways, thus leading to misunderstanding and mutual distrust. One of the interviewees (BKI-07), of course, cited an instance of the October 1, 2010 bomb-blast incident at the Eagle Square Abuja on the occasion of Nigeria’s 50th Independence Anniversary to show how “duplication of function works against production of reliable criminal intelligence for joint security operations on the part of sister security agencies in Nigeria. According to the said participant (BKI-07), as the police and DSS fought each other as to which of them should be responsible for handling the bomb-blast incident, they ended up producing conflicting versions of criminal intelligence that completely stalled the arrest and prosecution of those behind the bomb-blast incident up-till this day.

Majority of the participants also identified “lack of training and education on inter-agency collaboration” as one factor that prevents inter-agency cooperation towards joint

production of criminal intelligence for use in joint security operations against crimes in Benue State. According to these participants, most of the personnel of the security agencies, particularly responsible for criminal intelligence analysis/production least received any training or sound education on the need for and techniques of inter-agency collaboration. As a consequence, therefore, so said the participants, instead of join hands together to leverage on the combined individual knowledge, competencies and experience of a wider array of analysts from more agencies to produce uniform criminal intelligence products that can lead to quality results based on their being credible, factual and stronger. As a consequence, therefore, they end up producing criminal intelligence products that are not only conflicting in nature, but also lack much credibility or factualness. According to most of the participants, as a corollary to the foregoing, most of the security agencies lack personnel who have had enough training or educational background in intelligence analysis/production function. The consequence of the foregoing is that each time the need arises for contribution of personnel for joint intelligence production in the case of joint security operation, most of the agencies fail to send their respective men because they don't have such, as the saying goes that "no one gives what he doesn't have". The foregoing is known to have stalled most efforts at joint security investigations. As one participant revealed:

"In, this task force (OPWS), we don't have enough analysts. The same was the case when I was at similar Taskforce (Operation Python Dance) at Owerri. We relied as we do today on few of our senior officers who have some few wealth of experience, but no formal education or training in intelligence analysis. The same situation obtains across the police and DSS outside the task force. Because of this, we are always compelled to rely on half-baked intelligence or raw information from vigilante or Livestock Guards people in conducting most of our operations" (BKI – 03).

What are the factors that lead to inter-agency rivalry amongst security agencies that militate against their effective sharing/dissemination of criminal intelligence end-products amongst themselves for use in their joint security operations?

A good majority of the participants also identified envy or jealousy on part of some security agencies against their sister agencies over perceived exclusive or privileged job specification given to the latter as key factor that gives impetus to the escalating lack of inter-agency collaboration, particularly as it concerns sharing of criminal intelligence in Nigeria. The said participants contended that aided by the factors of selfishness and pecuniary interest, envy or jealousy makes a particular security agency fight sister agency over a given assignment, function or role which clearly falls outside the immediate constitutional mandate of the former, but simply because such assignment, function or role is considered by the latter as being "juicy". The foregoing also finds

ample support in the earlier finding by Alemika (2002), Omogui (2006) and Odoma (2014) who had in their separate studies identified envy or jealousy by other agencies against their sister agencies over perceived exclusive privileged job specification given to the latter as one factor that gives impetus to the escalating inter-agency animosity that militates against inter-agency collaboration among security agencies in Nigeria. For instance, just recently, the DSS came out publicly to label the Police and other anti-graft agencies, without discrimination, as impostors. For effect, it warned the public that not all operators in black uniforms belong to the Service.

Another factor majority of the participants identified to be a militating factor against inter-agency free sharing of criminal intelligence among security agencies in the country is that of “poor or weak leadership” both on the part of government leaders themselves and heads of the agencies concerned. According to the said participants, the political authorities in government display weak leadership characterized by lack of the political will, bias, and compromise that discourages volunteering of raw information by members of the public and sharing of intelligence by security agencies. The heads of security agencies themselves also exhibit very weak leadership that lacks strong command-and-control capability, broadminded and all-inclusive disposition and perspective that places emphasis on inter-agency sharing/dissemination of criminal intelligence as a potent tool for the fight against crime, particularly through the use of the techniques of joint security operation. As one participant observed:

“All along, government and its security agencies have shown lack of commitment to utilize the various intelligence products being churned out on daily basis for use in either averting crime or prosecuting suspects or further criminal investigations. There is much evidence to show that due to this show of weak leadership, criminal intelligence products are not well shared or disseminated across the agencies in Benue State, particularly the joint task force that badly needs such for effective joint security operations. As I speak to you, attacks, killings and destruction by local criminals, robbers, bandits, Boko Haram terrorists in North-east, Fulani herdsmen in this Benue, Plateau, Zamfara, Nasarawa and others, cattle rustlers, inter-communal warlords have continued till today. Does it mean there are no intelligence or evidence produced beforehand, and does it mean no suspect have been arrested since in this regard. The answer is capital No” (BKI-06).

Still on the issue of bad leadership and inter-agency cooperation for effective sharing of criminal intelligence, another participant observed:

“Tell me why no single terrorist or herdsman suspect has been prosecuted or imprisoned to set example and as deterrence to others since. The problem is, of course, that of lack of leadership will-power, corruption, bias, compromise, and internal sabotage on the part of both political leadership heads of security agencies in Nigeria” (BKI-020).

The participants also identified other factors that cause inter-agency rivalry that militate against free flow of criminal intelligence among security agencies in the country to include poor funding, unnecessary comparison of ranks between agencies, inordinate penchant to use raw force to settle any slightest provocation or misunderstanding, and ignorance and lack of awareness about the individual complementary roles and capabilities of the various security agencies on the part of the personnel of other sister agencies.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Opinions amongst analysts are divided over the factors that are responsible for the prevailing lack of inter-agency cooperation and collaboration that prevent effective management of criminal intelligence towards result-oriented joint security operations against criminal threats to public safety and security in Nigeria, particularly in Benue State. As a result, the prevalent view, however, is that it stems from a multiplicity of sources which aggregate to a complex mutual distrust and animosity amongst the security agencies. The escalating incidents of clashes amongst these security agencies in Nigeria pose the complex question: who guards the guards? However, based on the findings of this study, the conclusion here is that factors such as superiority complex, and lack of regular interaction, and ignorance about the individual complementary role of sister security agencies featured as the major factors responsible for lack of inter-agency collaboration towards exchange of raw information among the various security agencies that undertake joint security operations against criminals. Secondly, duplication of functions that often leads to jurisdictional conflicts, lack of training or education coupled with dearth of intelligence analysts, and pecuniary interest were identified as specific factors that militate against inter-agency collaboration in the production/analysis of criminal intelligence for use in joint security operations. Thirdly, weak leadership on the part of both political leaders and heads of security agencies, and envy or jealousy over-perceived exclusive job assignments were identified as the main factors that militate against inter-agency sharing of criminal intelligence among security agencies in the country.

Against the backdrop of the foregoing, this study proffered the following recommendations. The first step here is repositioning of the Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA) which sits atop most of the security agencies in the country as the co-ordinator and overall supervisor. As part of the reform being proposed here, the duties of ONSA should be streamlined properly in order to divest it of the present jurisdictional conflicts with the duties of the Ministers of Defence, Interior, and Police Affairs. Again, it should also be ensured that the person being appointed the National Security Adviser is not below the rank of Lt. General in the Military, so as to place him

over and above the ranks of the various heads of security agencies that report to him from time to time.

Secondly, it is also recommended that both the operational and governance structures of the individual security agencies in Nigeria be reformed. The reform being proposed here should aim at removing any wasteful overlaps and unnecessary duplications of duties, mutual distrust and jurisdictional conflicts that arise through encroachment on each other's legal and operational spaces by the competing agencies. The reform here should also aim at ensuring that the duties of the agencies are properly streamlined such that information, criminal intelligence, and experience can be shared without eroding any individual mandates.

Thirdly, regular training programme on the modern approach to security operation known as intelligence-led counter terrorism (ILCT) should be organized jointly for the personnel of all the security agencies in Nigeria. As part of this training programme, it should also be ensured that the curriculum for such periodic training gives pride of place to such topics like Inter-agency collaboration (IAC) and criminal Intelligence Management (CIM).

Again, regular joint reorientation programme is also recommended as being vital to the effective inter-agency collaboration (IAC) in security provisioning. Such joint reorientation programme should essentially aim at infusing in the personnel of the various security agencies in the country all the key elements of IAC, including positive perception of the complementary roles of each of the various security agencies that make up the nation's security architecture, cooperation and mutual trust, consistency and feedback, and constructive criticism.

Finally, this study also recommended establishment of platforms that can serve as fluid channels of regular information and communication among the personnel of various security agencies in the country. Such platforms should include joint training programmes as earlier discussed, inter-agency sports tournaments and cultural jamborees, joint officers' mess and joint security operations through joint task forces.

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