

The Challenges of Non-State Security Groups in Security Provisioning in South-West, Nigeria

OLOMITUTU Adeniyi Kehinde

Department of Political Science, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria

ABSTRACT: Effective security management is one of the fundamental needs of any society since it is through it, that most desires of the society could be achieved. This paper attempts to investigate the challenges confronting Non-state security agents while intervening in security issues in South-western Nigeria. In doing that, reasons behind the intervention would also be identified. The paper is anchored by theory of a failed state while qualitative approach was employed using semi-structure interview and focused group discussion with data gathered analysed through content analysis. The paper showed that factors such as persistent cases of insecurity, interest of inhabitants and inability of statutory security agencies to provide lasting solution to insecurity experience in the region had significantly influenced the intervention. The paper found that financial constraint, lack of incentive and motivation, illiteracy, inadequate training and party affinity had greatly hindered the effective performance of these groups. The paper therefore, recommended that financial provision through government and influential citizens, regular joint security meeting within the community and procurement of modern equipment would aid their performance.

KEYWORDS: NSSGs, security, security provisioning, South-west, Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

Across the world especially Nigeria, a lot of factors drive insecurity which are inform of poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, corruption, marginalisation among others. Thus, insecurity has affected many communities across Nigeria which actually displaced many inhabitants from their permanent residence, waste of lives and properties (Olomitutu, 2024). Therefore, effective security remains perquisite for meaningful progress and the achievement of good quality life of any human organisation because it provides a conducive environment for people to live and work towards realising the state objective. In another way, the absence of effective security hinders citizens from achieving desires of a state. That is why the issue of security delivery remains constitutional functions of government, failure to perform such functions is equivalent to a weak state which sometimes give rise to alternative security outfits apart from that of statutory security agencies. These alternative security outfits could be vigilante groups, local hunters ethnic militias, which could be generally regarded as non- state security actors(Alemika, 2018; Hesbon, 2020).

In Nigeria, insecurity experience has been inform of kidnapping, banditry, terrorism, Boko-Haram insurgency, ritualism, Fulani herdsman among others which have put many community members into perpetual fear and literally turned the country to a state of nature which Thomas Hobbes in his social contract theory described to be nasty, brutish, short and poor. This insecurity has aggravated to the level where several innocent people were victims such as Prof. Olayinka, OAU lecturer who was kidnapped along Ibadan-Ikire road, Daughter of Fasoranti in Akure, assassination of Dr. Aborode in Igangan, Ibarapa North Local government area of Oyo State, killing of Anglican Church members during Sunday service in Owo, Ondo State among others. These incidences and others factors really informed the intervention of NSSGs in security management of South-west, Nigeria (Onwuegbusi, 2017; Olomitutu, 2024).

Though, in every society, government is constitutionally saddled with the duty of security provision as pronounced by Thomas Hobbes, John Lock, and J.J. Rouseus in their theory of social contract but to achieve effective security across the country government alone should not be left with the function. Supporting this assertion, Phillip Zimbardo(1969) in his theory of Broken window expressed that effective security management begins from grass-root level where community security stakeholders especially, vigilante groups, local hunters who know all the nooks and crannies of their community are involved as against the ideal of outsider(statutory security agencies). He stated further, that every potential crime in the country began very small, and should be urgently attended to while it was very small before becoming too big that would eventually disorganize the whole society. To him, insecurity is a local problem, which needed to be solved indigenously (Hesbon, 2020). Having realized this several communities in South-west engaged the service of NSSGs to fill the security gap of their community. However, despite the effectiveness of these groups, several factors hinder their operations as supported by Ajayi (2020) who identified illiteracy, financial constraints and

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inadequate equipment. This paper intends to take a critical investigation of challenges confronting NSSGs while intervening in security management of the South-west, Nigeria.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

Several scholars explain the term Non-state security agents in different ways depend on the lens each of them considers it and the situation is being used for. Therefore, Abrahamsen & Williams (2011) see Non-state security agents are entities or organizations that operate independently of formal state institutions to provide security-related services. These include private security companies, community-based organizations, militias, insurgent groups, and international actors such as NGOs and transnational corporations involved in security functions. Non-state security agents often fill gaps in areas where state institutions are weak or absent, offering both formal and informal security solutions. Singer (2003) sees Non-state actors in security include private security companies, armed groups, and community-based security initiatives, which operate independently of state control to fulfill various protection roles. Kaldor (2001) views Non-state security agents are actors other than government forces that engage in security-related activities, often filling governance gaps in conflict or post-conflict settings. Avant, (2005) refers Non-state security agents refer to private entities or organizations that perform security functions, including private military companies, local militias, or vigilante groups, sometimes in collaboration with state institutions. Small, & Singer, (1982) see Non-state security providers are diverse actors ranging from private firms to community networks that deliver security services, either complementing or competing with state institutions.

Sennewald, & Baillie (2015) describe Security management as the systematic process of identifying, assessing, and mitigating risks to ensure the protection of people, assets, and information. This involves planning, implementing, and monitoring security policies, procedures, and measures to safeguard against threats. Effective security management integrates physical, personnel, and information security strategies, aligning them with organizational goals. Dhillon, (2017) views "Security management as a multidisciplinary field focusing on the development of strategies and practices to manage and mitigate security threats in diverse contexts, ranging from physical security to cyber resilience". Fischer, Halibozek, & Walters. (2019) express that "Security management encompasses the policies, practices, and systems designed to protect public spaces, infrastructure, and populations from criminal activities and emergencies". According to Whitman, & Mattord(2021) Security management refers to the processes and methodologies employed to protect information systems from unauthorized access, data breaches, and cyber threats while ensuring availability, confidentiality, and integrity'. Bennett, (2020) observes that "Security management involves the identification, assessment, and implementation of strategies to safeguard organizational assets, including information, personnel, and physical resources, against risks and threats". Peltier (2016) views "Security management as the systematic process of identifying, assessing, and mitigating risks to ensure the safety and security of individuals, organizations, and assets". Non-state security agents play a significant role in the overall security architecture of Nigeria. Their involvement in security management complements the efforts of formal state security agencies like the police and military in addressing Nigeria's security challenges, including insurgency, banditry, kidnapping, and communal conflicts.

The Theory of Failed State

The theory is germane in explaining the state institutional weaknesses in addressing security challenges as the justification for employing NSSAs' intervention in South-western states of Nigeria. This theory was attributed to the views of former UN Secretary General Kofi Anna in 2000. Other notable and influential works associated with the theory of the failed State include Robert Rotberg's discourse in 2004 When state Fails and Zartman's work in 1995 on Collapse States, which focuses primarily on Africa. The theory described a failed state as a situation where a government loses its capacity to uphold law and order, deliver essential services, and exert effective control over its domain. These are characterised by widespread corruption, weak institutions, poor governance, rampant crime, and often, civil unrest or violence (Rotberg, 2004). This theory is significant when discussing community policing because it highlights the gaps in governance that Non-state security organisations seek to address. The theory argued further that NSSAs intend to fill the void left by ineffective state policing by engaging community patrol and surveillance in order to maintain security and order. In a failed state, where the government is unable to provide effective security, the theory suggested that, community can empower residents to take collective responsibility for their safety (Zartman, 1995). The theory contended that, in failed states, trust in the government and statutory security agencies is often eroded due to corruption, brutality, or inefficiency but community policing techniques focus on building trust between law enforcement and NSSAs. This is achieved through regular interaction, transparency, and responsiveness to local needs, which can enhance the perceived legitimacy of security efforts (Baker, 2002).

The theory stressed that NSSAs leverage local knowledge and resources to address security challenges since they have better understanding of the security issues of their environment and can provide valuable insights that formal police might overlook. In failed states, where formal institutions are weak, these NSSAs becomes crucial (Hills, 2009). The theory argued further that failed states often experience high levels of crime and violence due to the breakdown of law and order. Additionally, NSSAs can help in preventing crime by fostering cooperation between them and Nigerian Police. The operational strategies such as neighborhood

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watch, joint patrols, and conflict resolution initiatives can mitigate violence and improve public safety (Rotberg, 2004). The theory stressed that community policing contributes to social cohesion by promoting collective action and mutual support. In failed states, where social fabric might be frayed, these efforts can help rebuild community ties and resilience against criminal elements or insurgent groups exploiting the state's weakness (Hills, 2009). For instance, several NSSAs were emerged in some communities in South-western states of Nigeria to ensure safety of their environment where it seems Federal Government was not making adequate security provision for the areas as a result of recurring cases of insecurity.

METHODOLOGY

This paper employed descriptive research design using focused group discussion and semi-structure interview with total of 45 respondents drawn from Non-state security agent officers, community leaders, statutory security agent officers and residents of the selected communities from the chosen south-western states. In addition, three Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted with thirty (30) participants (10 for each group) drawn from residents in each of the three selected states. This was to complement the data sourced from semi-structured interview. The data gathered were analyzed using content analysis.

Reasons for the intervention of non-state security agents' security management in Nigeria

Several factors are attributed to intervention of NSSAs in the security matters of South west, these include inadequate work force, in the Nigerian police, has led to the involvement of private security outfits by companies, organisations, Landlord Associations, communities and Local Governments in South-western States to provide internal security for members or residents of a particular area against armed robbery, kidnapping, and farmers- herdsmen crisis. This fact called for the involvement of Non-state security groups in the security provision of the communities in South-western States as an attempt to curb the serious threat posed by armed robbers, kidnappers, rapists and herdsmen. The increase in security challenges has put many communities in the state in suffering, pain and dismay due to the destruction of numerous lives and properties(Ojo e tal, 2022).

Accordingly, the non-state security groups have involved in policing many communities in South-western States since experience and practice had clearly shown that Non-State Security Groups (NSSG) can effectively contribute in reducing crime and promoting security to the areas exposed to a threat or another (Odinkalu, 2011). Alemika and Chukwuma (2000) added that, as a result of police inefficiency and ineffectiveness in crime detection, apprehension, prevention, control, poor rule of law record, the violation of human rights and widespread corruption, the public's negative opinion of the police, and their brutality, extortion, and inefficiency. Abrahassen & William (2005) observed that, the loss of trust and confidence in the police as well as unrelenting rise to violence and crimes in the society necessitated the involvement of NSSGs. Smith (2007) stressed that the public's desire for NSSGs may be seen as a reaction to the widely held misconception that the police and other state institutions are too corrupt to reduce crime. As Baker(2002:223) stated it:

The inability of the Nigeria government to curb the menace of criminality across the nation through Nigerian police that is constitutionally mandated to ensure the protection of lives and properties facilitates the need for restructuring and the intervention of vigilante organisations. While we recognise the implication of untrained citizens, without a clear defined structures or command acting outside the structures of constitution to enforce law and orders. Pending the creation of independent state policing command, the statutory security agencies must have better understanding and show greater appreciation of the positive role play by vigilante organisations in enhancing effective laws and orders. Based on this fact, both the government and the citizens need to come up with idea on how the efforts of vigilante organisations could be harnessed or integrated to sustain effective security across communities in the country.

The involvement of NSSGs in the security issues in various communities in South-western States has been closely associated with the disproportionate increase in the rise of crimes and conflicts as well as inability of the police to tame the rising menace of these criminal activities(Ojo e tal, 2022). These NSSGs assist the police in suppressing criminal activities of kidnapping, armed robbery and herdsmen, which have increased in many communities in South-western States. The private security outfits that belong to this category are tagged Non-state security groups within a community that partners with the police to maintain peace, vigilance, orderliness and security. These organisations guide markets, control traffic and network, collectively, to reduce crimes. Their patrols are jointly carried out with police against criminals (Osuntokun, 2022). This strategy is to arrest suspected criminals easily without necessarily engaging in combat or killing them before they are prosecuted. Suspects who have been arrested are turned over to the police for additional questioning and prosecution. Because of their efficient, dependable, and timely response to criminal matters, these NSSGs are frequently trusted by communities more than police (Yaqub & Olaniyi, 2004:32). In spite of this tremendous contribution, the nation still finds it difficult to integrate the activities of these NSSGs, especially vigilante groups, Oodua People's Congress (OPC) and Hunters into mainstream policing in Nigeria, even when it is clearly comprehended that the police force is not providing the expected result. However, a number of serious concerns has attracted different scholars and well-meaning individuals in the country as regards to their operational logistic and role.

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The Major Challenges confronting NSSGs in Security Provision in South-Western States

Although NSSGs strive to actively intervene and carry out the task of ensuring effective protection of lives and properties of the residents in the region, but their efforts have not been enough to completely deter attacks against innocent citizens due to the several constraints that the operations encountered.

In line with this, Agoro(2024) ¹ noted that:

We face a lot of problems while trying to address the security threats of our community. One of the problems is lack of transportation especially patrol vehicles which has made the operation very tedious particularly in touching nooks and crannies of the community. Another one is lack of sufficient fund to procure necessary materials needed for effective performance of the groups.

In supporting Agoro ¹'s view, Mogbojuri(2024) ³⁵ added logistic problem and low motivation from the respective community to lack of better transportation which was raised by Agoro (2024) ¹. While buttressing the above views on challenges confront NSSGs in their community, a participant in FGD¹ specifically mentioned that:

Looking at their performances all around, they are in the best position to tackle certain criminal challenges but their vehicles are old, in fact it is the oldest vehicle you can find around, how many cars can that one chase. They need to be well equipped.

In his contribution, Opadiran(2024) ⁴² mentioned two major setbacks suffered by the members of NSSGs which include, lack of sophisticated weapons and knowledge on standard operational procedures. The view of Opadiran ⁴² was alluded by Akande(2024) ²² and Majekodunmi (2024)² who specifically identified AK47 rifle as one of sophisticated weapons which the groups lack. They claimed that one could hardly see any member of the groups with modern equipment. Most members do carry local weapons such as native gun, sword, cutlass and knife. This is buttressed by Olaniyi (2005) who discovered that Non-state security organisations frequently face challenges from criminals who operate with highly developed weaponry. The nature of equipment used by NSSGs has a great influence in their operational effectiveness in the region. He also noted lack of full cooperation among the members as another challenge encountered by the organization in which the higher-ranking officers disregard certain decision made.

Another respondent who also participated on NSSGs' intervention in security provision in South-western States, Olanrewaju (2024) ⁸ puts some of the challenges they faced thus:

While in operation, we sometimes suffer setback as a result of inadequacy of funds to buy equipment and food. Most of the equipment used by these criminals are more powerful than the one we use. This makes it difficult to quickly conquer them especially when we found them at their hide out. Another one is starving which we always experience during the operation particularly in the forest because sometimes we do spend many days in the forest pursuing criminals and it may be difficult to eat once in a day due to financial constraint. Sometimes, the community that we are serving may not even think of providing food for us.

In a related view, Oladejo(2024) ⁴³ and Omilade(2024) ²⁷ observed that as a result of inadequate funds, the newly recruited members could not spend longer period for training, procure modern equipment, the members were short of food during the intervention as well as lack of patrol vehicles and cooperation from the conventional security agencies. Supporting the above view, Aghedo & Eke, (2013) observed that Non-state security groups typically operate with limited financial and logistical resources. This limits their ability to train personnel, acquire necessary equipment, and sustain operations. For instance, community vigilante groups in rural areas lack access to modern communication tools and vehicles, impeding their capacity to respond promptly to threats.

Similarly, most participants in FGD² specifically identified insufficient funds as one of critical factors hindering the organisations from procuring recent operational equipment and other necessary materials needed for effective performance of the organisation. Some respondents pinpointed to insufficient personnel as threat to the operation in various communities in South-West which Adeyeye (2024)⁶ and Oladokun(2024)¹⁰ particularly singled out as restricting their intervention to certain areas. In the words of Adetunji(2024)³⁰

Prominent among the challenges that confronted the operation are inadequate fund available to NSSGs; insufficient personnel needed for the intervention. The officers are critically low to ensure effective protection of the citizens in the region. The intervention also faced the difficulty of inadequate logistics and equipment needed to carry out the operation. These challenges informed the perception that NSSGs are incapable of ensuring effective peace and security.

Supporting Adetunji(2024) ³⁰ assertion, almost participants in FGD¹ identified insufficient modern operational equipment and inadequate funds as major challenges seriously affecting the performance of the organisations. The above opinions are in agreement with the study conducted by Alemika and chukwuna (2003) who related the major problems of NSSGs to insufficient funds, lack of basic operational equipment such as flashlights, warm clothing, rain boots, rain coats, identified cards, whistles and uniforms as well as lack of adequate training and intimidation from the Nigerian police when carrying out their duties.

In a different view, Ajiibi(2024) ²⁵ expressed that:

language and communication barriers are major problem confronting NSSGs since most of them did not have formal education. These bring a lot of problems when it comes to the issue of writing report on criminal incidence.

The consequence of illiteracy could not be over emphasised, as most members of NSSGs find it difficult to write effectively when it comes to documenting criminal incidence. The results of this study are consistent with those of previous investigations into the

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subject. The effects of low education are mentioned by Olaniyi (2005) and Alemika and Chukwuma (2003) in different research. Olaniyi notably draws attention to the risk of untrained civilians acting as security guards without a clear hierarchy or set of instructions and enforcing law and order outside of the established legal framework. The main shortcoming of vigilante organisations, according to Alemika and Chukwuma, is inadequate training.

In a different opinion, Alabi(2024)¹⁹ contendd that

NSSGs members lack adequate professional training, because one- or two-weeks training is not enough for somebody involving in security service that is why their members always find it difficult to properly handle criminal issues especially in treating the suspects like confirmed criminals.

In a similar view, Ibirogba(2024)³⁸and Faledan(2024)²⁸ specifically emphasised unlawful torture, lack of technical skills to apprehend and handle criminal cases as the aftermath of the lack of proper training of NSSGs' members. In buttressing the above views, three participants in FGD³submitted that most NSSGs lack adequate training because that training duration is too short to expose the newly members to security skills and techniques needed for operation and this actually made them deviate from their normal duties during the operation. This is consistent with the research conducted by Onwuegbusi (2017), who identified that the groups face a number of difficulties, including as inadequate new member screening, the existence of touts or "bad eggs" among the vigilante members, the diversity of the organisations, and poor accountability of the organisations. The views are also alluded by Max and Archer (1999), who pointed out five major organisational issues that NSSGs (vigilante groups) are currently dealing with. These challenges include the organisations' legality and legitimacy in the eyes of the communities they serve; recruitment and managing staff; selecting the right operations; and maintaining resources, rewards, and motivation for the groups' survival, all of which are frequently not on good notes.

In a different opinion, Josehp (2024)¹⁴ and Olakojo(2024)¹⁶identified lack of full support and compensation from both government and community which almost weaken their morale in carrying out their operation effectively. They claimed that resource constraints expose the groups to depend on external aids which actually pose a serious threat to their accountability. Supporting this position, Craig and Porter (1997) regarded this problem as dual accountability: one to the funding source and one to the beneficiaries. Since most NSSG-funded projects lean more towards management than participation, most organisations find it difficult to strike a balance between these two factors. Consequently, NSSGs can wind up having greater accountability to donors than to stakeholders. Nureni(2024)²⁴ and Abdullahi(2024)⁴¹ expressed their feeling towards their efforts and commitment to the community service when they emphasized that the groups are not recognised and compensated by both government and community, this discourages most members to give out the best of their ability towards the service. The views of Nurein²⁴ and Abdullahi⁴¹ are buttressed by Akinbode(2024)³¹and two participants in FGD² added that the efforts of NSSGs are not appreciated by the conventional security agencies they are assisting. Instead, they see them as rivals who are taking up their duty. Nwolise, (2017) observed that NSSGs often experience strained relations with formal security agencies, such as the police and military, due to jurisdictional conflicts, competition for recognition, and accusations of undermining the state's authority. Such tensions sometimes lead to operational inefficiencies and even violent clashes.

The aforementioned opinions are consistent with a study conducted by Ekeh (2002), when responding to problems face Nigeria Police, argued that several Nigerian communities have turned to NSSGs to provide security for their communities instead of depending on the police to protect them. The preference of the NSSGs to the police by the residents might bring mutual distrust and rift between the two security organisations, the police might allege NSSGs of indulging in extortion and illegal detention of the suspects while NSSGs often accuse the police of too much corruption as they could be easily influenced by wealthy citizens. This scenario generated a great setback to the statutory functions of the two security bodies and thereby making the security problems of the community to become worse.

In a similar view, Giwa(2024)¹¹ observed that

to me one of major challenges confronting our groups is lack of incentive and motivation to our members. Even though we are rendering selfless service to the community, sometimes we have to be compensated in order to be more committed to community service.

Identifying with Giwa(2024)¹¹ opinion on challenges confront their members which make their morale to be very low, Opadiran(2024)⁴² contended that

As a result of the lack of incentives, majority of group members are now passive as they sought for alternative mean of sustaining. For instance, we have almost 95 members in our community, but only 30 are effective. Most of them just identify with us but refuse to come to office. This is because we have not been receiving salary. Though, we cannot ask them to be coming to office every day without proving daily bread and some of them have families to take care. For now, we tax ourselves and we also depend on donations that come from community to keep our operation function. In fact, some also source for money by providing security to corporate organisations or individuals. He added that "unfulfilled hope makes the heart unwell". Their morale is becoming low and we cannot blame them because they have family to feed.

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Maintaining the same position, but slightly different, Akano(2024)⁷ submitted that lack of remuneration and inadequate security materials enable the groups to be short of manpower. While supporting the above view, most participants in FGD³ argued that members of NSSGs are not adequately treated for the service rendered to humanity, especially when it comes to the issues of remuneration and incentive. Most members of the groups find it difficult to cater for themselves not to talk of family.

In similar but slightly different opinion, Adegoke(2024)²⁰ stressed that

In any human organisation, no matter how perfect an idea was, there would be people who would want to circumvent the programme to suit their purpose. Some members of NSSGs had been found to have collaborated with armed robbers by providing them (armed robbers) with information on their operations and even released their arms and ammunitions to the armed robbers but nearly all those NSSGs members involved in the illegal act are always apprehended and disciplined accordingly.

In line with above opinions, Alemika and Chukwuma (2003) pointed out that meager remuneration as one of the factors hindering NSSGs' effectiveness in their security services. They argued that this could offer an inducement of engaging in criminal activities and discouraging respectable people from enlisting the service. The view is buttressed by the study conducted by Knowland (2014) who perceived that similar vigilante organisations that began to help out in combating, armed robbery kidnappings and drug-dealings in Mexico sometimes abandon their statutory functions to drug dealing and exportation due to inadequate remuneration. Similarly, according to Justice for All Group (2012), even if the services of vigilante organisations are voluntary, members should be provided with a certain amount of welfare and compensation as a means of encouraging and improving their commitment to the operations. Even though the vigilante organisations have not been able to permanently stop criminal activity in the communities and locations they serve but they have ensured the protection of lives and properties to certain extent.

In contrast view two participants in FGD¹ submitted that most of NSSGs members in our community are sometimes loyal to political party because of monetary gain. They therefore, used to frustrate the political opponents. Ololade (2012) collaborated that NSSGs most times deviate from mandated responsibilities and side with powerful political figures, engaging in various crimes such as torturing and killing detainees without a fair trial, betraying the public's trust. Adibe,(2020) argued that some NSSGs are influenced by ethnic or political affiliations, which compromise their neutrality. This bias can lead to selective enforcement of security measures and exacerbate communal tensions. The Amotekun Corps, established in southwestern Nigeria, has faced criticism for being ethnically exclusive and allegedly targeting non-indigenous populations.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

In identifying rationale behind the involvement of NSSGs in security issues of the region, nearly all the respondents affirmed that high rate of insecurity and citizen interest for effective security significantly influenced the intervention. Other factors that have been identified include: Inability of conventional security agencies to curb and prevent crime, corruption and loss of confidence in the Nigerian police, frequent attacks of the community, inability of Nigerian police to protect lives and properties of the people, patriotic service to their region and the need to assist the Nigerian police in curbing criminality. Another major factor influencing NSSGs' intervention in security operation in South-western Nigeria is corruption and loss of confidence in the Nigerian police which has made them not to respond effectively towards the security threat of the community. So, the community has no option than to engage the service of private security outfits to bridge the security gap which conventional security agencies have been unable to close. Studies such as Owumi & Ajayi (2013), Chikwendu, Nwankwo & Oli (2016), Onwuegbusi (2017) and Hesbon (2020) affirmed this.

There is no doubt that the intervention is faced with huge challenges. One of the fundamental challenges faced by NSSGs in their operations is financial constraints which made it difficult for the groups to procure necessary materials. Another major difficulty is lack of sophisticated weapons to carry out their operations. The operations are poorly funded and ill-equipped to effectively confront criminals who use sophisticated weapons in their operations. Other challenges faced by the NSSGs' intervention in security issues of the South-western States include; lack of transportation especially patrol vehicles to cover the nooks and crannies of the community and lack of formal education, this makes it difficult to write criminal report when necessary. The results from this study aligned with the results of previous studies on the subject matter. In different studies, Olaniyi (2005) and Alemika and Chukwuma (2003) noted the consequences of lack of education. Olaniyi specifically perceived the danger of untrained citizens operating as security agents without definite and clear structure would automatically make them to act outside the mandate law of the society. Another difficulty is lack of incentive and motivation. Even though, the operation is voluntary, some measure of reward and welfare should be provided to members to boost their morale. The finding of this study is in line with Knowland (2014) who observed that certain vigilante organisations that started by assisting in preventing criminal activities in Mexico later abandoned their expected responsibilities and become drug dealers and traffickers due to absence of incentives and motivation.

Lack of adequate training is another major problem. The recruitment, training, operation and maintenance of the resources of the organisation are not always on good notes as well as poor accountability. The results of this study aligned with Onwuegbusi (2017) who stated absence of adequate training as one of the main shortcomings of vigilante groups. He further clarified that it is not that vigilante members are not trained, but they are not properly trained because without training they could not offer the service they

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rendered to their community. Lack of full support from both the formal security agencies and community they are serving is another challenge. Sometimes Nigerian police accuse them of indulging in their duties

Despite the challenges posed to NSSGs' intervention in security operation of South-western States, the study contended that NSSGs have been able to continue their mission which was believed to be in line with national security objective of ensuring peace and security of the various communities in Nigeria. Therefore, this shows that NSSGs dedicated enormous time, human and material resources to the security provision of the region. With this, one can easily conclude that these NSSGs stay ardently committed to the security provision through thick and thin than any other private security outfits in the region. This is mostly obvious based on the details elucidated above. Hence, the controversy between and among the citizens of Nigeria remain unresolved, as many Nigerians perceived NSSGs as unconstitutional which needed to be abolished since they are not part of the agencies established and recognised by the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Others saw them as legal since any private citizen can make arrest of criminal and hand over them to the Nigerian police. The fact still remains the same, in as much as the NSSGs' actions have not gone beyond this mandate of arrest and handing over of suspects to statutory security agencies, their activities are technically constitutional.

CONCLUSION

Based on the responses obtained and some literature reviewed, the study affirmed that NSSGs' intervention in security provision of the region was motivated by the high rate of criminality and citizen interest for effective security of the community. And their intervention witnessed enormous challenges.

Ways Out

This study recommends that:

- i. The government should incorporate NSSGs into the mainstream of formal security agencies as the issue of the welfare responsibilities of the members will be taken care of through the monthly salary, if incorporated.
- ii. The government, the community and the influential citizens should provide patrol vehicles for NSSGs to enhance their operation. In addition, NSSGs should be provided with better logistics and ammunitions for them to give their best because the criminals these days are using sophisticated weapons to carry out their operations.
- iii. Motivation of NSSGs members through compensation and regular incentives is very crucial and should be taken seriously to boost their morale, most especially, the members of the NSSGs that sustained serious injury and lost their lives during operations. They should be compensated for rendering selfless service to humanity. This will enable them to be more dedicated and committed to the assigned duties.
- iv. There should be regular joint security meeting to be organised by the community which would involve both the conventional security agencies and NSSGs. This will afford them opportunity to deliberate on security issues and how it is to be tackled in the community;
- v. Members of Non-state security groups would be more productive in the operation, if they received frequent training and retraining so that they may become knowledgeable about contemporary methods of combating crime, particularly in local communities.

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