

Regional Security Outfits: A Threat to Nigeria's Stability

By Sani Danaudi Mohammed



Plateau in the North Central region, Kano Hisbah, the civilian Joint Task Force in Borno State, and most recently, the Katsina State government's Community Watch Corps are few mention but a few. The assigned roles and mandates of these security outfits remain a source of great concern. The peaceful coexistence of Nigeria is being threatened by numerous individuals who are directly targeting a specific group or tribe.

Regional security networks are designed to safeguard locals because, frequently, assistance has not arrived from the federal government's center when it was most needed. Since most, if not all, of these outfits are classified as ethnic and regional security outfits rather than wearing a

national look, the outcry that accompanied their creation is the major issue that needs to be addressed. As of right now, it seems like the Nigerian federation is losing ground. The Nigerian federation has always been funded by royalties from the sale of oil resources. This goes against the traditional principles of federalism, which provide the component units with fiscal autonomy and direct revenue flow to the center. As a result, the survival of the states in Nigeria became nearly entirely dependent on the federally distributable revenues. According to available reports; this makes it difficult for state governments to implement these initiatives. States and other federating units lost their autonomy over their state's policing system as a result of this fiscal centralization frenzy. Other groups have emerged in response to the mandates of the aforementioned outfits, as many of them have been accused of unfairly arresting other tribes. The emergence of tribal vigilante groups is a worrying issue that I feel is imperative to address as a citizen of Nigeria. Nigeria, a nation endowed with abundant natural resources and a diverse population, is facing an increasingly serious crisis

According to Section 214 of the 1999 Nigerian Constitution, no other police force shall be established for the Federation or any part of it. There shall be a police force for Nigeria, which shall be known as the Nigeria Police Force. The section categorically forbids the creation of any additional police for the Federation or any portion of it. Proponents of the creation of a state police force have voiced their support for it, citing aspects of federalism as their justification. Nigeria has recently faced unheard-of security threats, including attacks by Boko Haram terrorists (BHTs), militancy, armed robbery, banditry, kidnapping for ransom, conflicts between farmers and herders, cultism, and other social vices. The formation of these ethnic and regional security groups has been attributed to the federal and state government's failure to fulfill their fundamental duty of defending the lives and property of the populace. From 1999 until now, there has been a greater call for State Police due to the wave of violent killings by armed bandits and robbers, armed ethnic militias, and the persistent threat posed by Boko Haram. Many people, including state governors, believed that the only way to address Nigeria's alarming level of insecurity is to deploy regional security forces. However, these security outfits have implicitly or explicitly introduced federalism into policing. Notable examples include the Ebubeagu in the South East and Amotekun in the South West. The Benue Guards and Operation Rainbow in



that could jeopardize its stability. The Nigerian crisis is a multifaceted problem involving a number of socio-political, economic, and ethnic elements. Tribal vigilante groups may be formed with the intention of safeguarding and protecting their communities, but it is important to understand that these organizations may unintentionally make the situation in Nigeria worse. Here are some explanations for the potential harm that tribal vigilante groups could cause: Tribal-based vigilante groups have the potential to escalate already-existing conflicts or spark brand-new ones. These organizations have the potential to exacerbate existing divisions and hostility, which could escalate violence, rather than fostering peace and unity.

The interests of their own ethnic group may take precedence over those of other ethnic communities, which could lead to discrimination against them. In the case of Plateau State operation Rainbow, Amotekun, Ebebeagu, and Benue Security Guards are accused of siding with their own rather than defending the Communities. The Yan Banga from Zamfara and Katsina have also been charged with the savage murder of Fulani people, and Amotekun and Ebebeagu are said to be local security groups defending the rights of Yoruba and Igbo miners.

Recently, the leadership of Miyetti Allah Kautal Hore, led by Bello Bodejo, oversaw over 2000 Fulani Vigilantes in Lafia, Nasarawa State. Even though they stood and advocated for similar in middle belt states, the Middle Belt Elders Forum countered the Miyetti Allah Kautal Hore a day after their inauguration. Tribal vigilante groups can erode the trust between different communities and undermine the social fabric that binds us together as Nigerians. There are should be proper oversight and regulation, tribal vigilante groups may operate outside the confines of the law. This can lead to human rights abuses, vigilantism, and the loss of due process. It is essential to ensure accountability and adherence to legal frameworks to protect the rights and safety of all individuals irrespective of tribes, religion and regional identities. Nigerians have been victims of political manipulation due to exploitation and weaponisation of poverty by politicians for their own gain. Political elites often use these groups to secure power, influence elections, or advance their political agendas at the detriment of Peace and Unity of the Nigerian State. Also perceived wise people who serve or called them self as National tribal leaders use these groups to scavenge funds from state and federal government in the n a m e o f p e a c e. Weak Governance and Security Forces is a major course. The inability of the government to effectively address

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security challenges and maintain law and order pave the way to the emergence of ethnic militias to thrive. Lack of good governance, corruption, and the lack of a strong security apparatus have continue to give room for the advancement of this evil. To address this effectively, addressing root causes of ethnic tensions is paramount not prescribing tribes as terrorist. There should be a focus on promoting peace building initiatives, fostering inter-ethnic dialogue, and addressing socio-economic disparities. Investing in education, job creation, and infrastructural development are key in bringing back the lost glory of Nigeria. Government must ensure accountability and justice for victims of ethnic violence. Perpetrators of crimes should be prosecuted in a fair and transparent manner, sending a clear message that such actions will not be tolerated. In addition, fostering national unity and promoting a sense of shared identity among diverse ethnic groups is crucial. Encouraging cultural exchanges, promoting diversity in public institutions, and celebrating national events that showcase Nigeria's rich heritage can help bridge the gaps between different communities and foster a sense of belonging. The international community should support Nigeria in its efforts to address the dangers of ethnic militia through diplomatic engagement, capacity-building initiatives, and providing financial assistance for Peace building programs. The federal government needs to build a strong security team that will restore the confidence of Nigerians that their lives and properties will be safeguarded henceforth. We must prioritize dialogue, understanding, and collaboration across ethnic lines. By fostering inclusivity, promoting justice, and working towards national unity, we can build a stronger and more peaceful future for our beloved country Nigeria. Mangu and Bokkos Local Governments of Plateau State are both victims of political manipulation, injustice and power-play by certain vested interest groups. Nigerians must learn to accept it each other as no Nigerian is more Nigerian than any other Nigerian.

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