

The Nigeria Police and the Burden of Election Security: An Interrogation of the 2023 General Elections

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Abstract

The integrity and success of every election are largely dependent on the effectiveness of the election security administration and management. This paper examined and appraised the role of the Nigeria Police as the lead security and law enforcement agency in Nigeria, in promoting election security during the 2023 General Elections in Rivers State. The investigation was propelled by the public outcry and condemnation of the conduct and outcomes of the 2023 General Elections in the state in certain quarters and sections of the media, especially by accusing, among others, the Nigeria Police of bias, partisanship, impunity and unprofessionalism in handling security challenges during the elections. The objectives of the paper were to examine the role of the Nigeria Police in promoting election security during the 2023 General Elections in the state, ascertain the security challenges encountered and based on findings, make appropriate recommendations. Being qualitative research, the paper relied on primary and secondary sources of data collection and applied the qualitative analytical technique of content analysis. Structural Functionalism and Human Security Theory were adopted as the theoretical frameworks. The paper identified some challenges that confronted the police during the elections; concluded that the role of the police is indispensable in order to guarantee electoral integrity and safety of stakeholders at all levels of elections in the state and made appropriate recommendations for dealing with security matters in future elections in the state.

Background to the Study

Election security is architectonic and indispensable for the attainment of an orderly, efficient and effective election administration and management, credible electoral choice being the hallmark of democracy and good governance. The Nigeria Police have constitutional and statutory responsibilities to ensure, among others, the enforcement of laws, prevention and detection of crimes as well as the preservation of public tranquility (Rotimi, 2001; Omeni, 2024). Therefore, it is impossible to dispute the role that security agencies, particularly the Nigeria Police, play in ensuring the safety of people and property before, during, and following Nigeria's general election processes and activities. This is because safety, security, law and order are not only critical enablers, but also the foundations for facilitating credible, transparent, free, fair, and successful elections.

Section 4 of the Nigeria Police Act, 2020, which replaced the Police Act, 2004, provides for the functions of the Nigeria Police which by necessary implications, include the provision and maintenance of public safety, order, and security to ensure electoral integrity which is essential for recruitment of political leadership and institution of sustainable democracy. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) (Amendment) Act, 2022, mandates the Commission to, among others, supervise and conduct elections into various elective executive and legislative offices at both the national and state levels. On 25th February and 18th March, 2023, respectively, the Commission conducted elections for one thousand, four hundred and ninety-one (1,491) elective positions, inclusive of the office of the President and twenty-eight (28) of the thirty-six Governorship positions in the country, encompassing Rivers State. In Rivers State, elections were held in her twenty-three (23) local government areas, 319 electoral wards and 4,442 polling units, with a total registered voting population of 3,215,273 (INEC Report, 2023). Most of the previous elections in the state had either been marred or characterized by violence, intimidation and harassment of political opponents and voters; hijacking and destruction of electoral materials, impersonation, over voting, rigging, bribery and corruption, especially buying of votes and other monetary inducements of electoral officials, security personnel and militarization of the voting process.

The officials of some security agencies, including the police, had at different elections been accused of either electoral sabotage or aiding certain candidates, political parties or voters to manipulate elections, thereby compromising election security (Ali & Ali, 2022; Azom, 2024; Afolabi, 2018). There have also been cases of wanton destruction of property and loss of lives. In this regard, Kalagbor and Akani (2022) observed that although there was no doubt incidence of violence during the 2011 and 2015 general elections in Rivers State, the state experienced the worst election marked by loss of human lives and property during the 2019 general elections. There were ferocious political struggle and rivalry between the Federal Government-controlled All Progressives Congress (APC) at the centre and the People's Democratic Party (PDP) controlled Rivers State with Nyesom Wike as Governor.

Commenting on the role of the Nigeria Police and the Armed Forces on election security, Beredugo (2023) referring to the 2016 National and State Assemblies Re-run Elections as well as the 2018 Port Harcourt State Constituency 3 By-election, stated that the Nigeria Police and other security agencies gave strong assurances that they would continue to fulfill their constitutional responsibility of maintaining peace and order before, during, and after the elections. Essentially, the election security functions of the Nigeria Police can be divided into three categories: standby functions, this involves police personnel that are ready and prepared to be mobilized or deployed if and when the need arises; dynamic or operational functions and static functions, such as protection of the Commission's buildings, offices and other property and movement or transfer of election materials, including results. These functions are carried out in consultation and collaboration with officials of the electoral body and in special circumstances, other security agencies to ensure peaceful, open, transparent and credible elections. The ability and capacity of the Nigeria Police to discharge the role of promoting effective election security in Rivers State are equally dependent on, among others, the competence and number of police personnel mobilized, information gathering and management strategies, conducive operational circumstances, logistical factors and terms and conditions of service of the police. In the light of the foregoing, the cardinal focus of this paper is to examine and evaluate the role of the Nigeria Police in the promotion of election security during the 2023 General elections in Rivers State.

Statement of the Problem

Adekeye and Chima (2022) had observed that the greatest concern to all stakeholders in the 2023 general elections in Nigeria was how to secure the lives and property of Nigerians before, during and after the electioneering process and period. Election security in Nigeria in general and Rivers State especially, has over the years proven to be a difficult task for a number of reasons. One of the major factors is the complex nature of our electoral system. With a relatively large population and diverse regions, ensuring security across the country during elections can be quite challenging. Another reason is the presence of political violence and conflicts. Nigeria has experienced instances of political unrest, which can escalate during election periods. This poses a threat to the safety and security of voters, electoral officials, and even security personnel themselves. Additionally, there have been concerns about the lack of proper training and capacity-building for the police and other security agencies involved in election security. Adequate preparation and knowledge are crucial for addressing potential security threats and maintaining a peaceful electoral environment.

The police as the lead security and law enforcement agency in the country have a significant role to play in the promotion of election security. Unfortunately, and in many instances, they have been failing to provide adequate and effective security during elections. The Nigeria Police, especially have regularly and strongly been criticized for various misconducts during elections. One of the main criticisms is the lack of professionalism and partiality exhibited by some police personnel. There have been reports of police officers and men involved in acts of intimidation, harassment, and even

collusion with political actors. These undermine the credibility and fairness of the electoral process. Another issue is inadequate training and capacity-building of police personnel in handling election-related matters. Many officers and men may not have the necessary knowledge, skills and experience to effectively manage security challenges during elections. This can result in a lack of proper crowd control and management; mishandling of sensitive situations, and an overall failure to ensure a secure environment for voters. Additionally, there have been concerns about the politicization of the police, with allegations of police personnel being used as tools by politicians to intimidate opposition parties or manipulate election outcomes. These have the potentials to compromise the independence and neutrality of the police, erode public trust in their ability to provide fair and unbiased security during elections. Furthermore, the Nigeria police face other challenges in terms of logistics and resource allocation. Inadequate funding, limited and obsolete equipment and weaponry, and poor infrastructure can hamper their ability to effectively carry out their duties during elections. This can result in delays, inefficiencies, and vulnerabilities that can be exploited by those seeking to disrupt or manipulate the electoral process. While there is no quick fix to these challenges, ongoing efforts to strengthen the Nigeria Police and enhance their capacity to provide effective and impartial policing during elections are essential for the credibility and stability of the democratic process. Consequently, it is against this backdrop that this paper aims to examine and focus on the role of the Nigeria Police in promoting election security during the 2023 General Elections in Rivers State, being one of the thirty-six states constituting the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Research Methods and Theoretical Frameworks

Research Methods

This paper is qualitative research and involved the collection, analysis, and interpretation of non-numerical or descriptive data. It relied on both primary and secondary sources of data collection and content analysis. One of the core advantages of qualitative research is the ability to explain the processes and patterns of human attitudes and behaviours which are difficult to quantify. The adoption of the qualitative research method in this paper was informed by the fact that it is most appropriate for providing answers to the questions on "how" and "why" of the study, especially in understanding and analysing the task or role of the Nigeria Police in the promotion of security during the 2023 general elections in Rivers State, which largely border on behaviour and attitude of the police security personnel which cannot easily be quantified. The primary source of data collection focused on the researchers' firsthand observations, experiences and information obtained during the elections. Specifically, the secondary source of data and documents used for this paper included textbooks, encyclopedias, journal articles, dictionaries, newspapers, magazines, the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria; the Electoral Act 2022, the Nigeria Police Act 2020, and the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) Election Security Manual and Reports. Others were INEC's Code of Conduct and Rules of Engagement for Security Personnel on Election Duties, 2020; the Nigeria Police Orders; the Standard Operating Procedures; unpublished academic research works and online resources, etc.

Theoretical Frameworks

The two Theoretical Frameworks of Analysis adopted for this paper are Structural Functionalism and Human Security Theory. Structural Functionalism was first experimented in the Biological and Mechanical Sciences. Herbert Spencer, is referred to as the father of Structural Functionalism; August Comte, Robert Merton, Emile Durkheim and Parsons, among others, were the early thinkers of Structural Functionalism. In Political Science and analysis, the Structural Functional Theory is very much associated with Gabriel Almond (Nwaorgu, 2002; Ntete-Nna, 2004). Structural Functionalism is a theoretical framework which is commonly used in the Social Sciences, especially in Political Science and Sociology. It stresses the importance of structures and functions in society.

The key assumptions of Structural Functionalism are that society and social units are held together by cooperation and orderliness; every structure in society performs certain functions for the maintenance, stability and growth of the society; human societies generally gravitate towards structural differentiation (creation of structures, institutions, organs or bodies) which specialize in and concentrate on the performance of specific functions in order to ensure integration, cohesion and social order in society. Such functions can be classified into manifest (intended) and latent (unintended) functions (Ake, 1979). According to Mahajan (1988:33), "The goal of structural functional analysis is to find out what these crucial structures do". According to Gabriel Almond's political theory, the government's two primary roles are input and output. The functions that go into formulating rules, applying them, and adjudicating them include political socialization and recruitment, interest aggregation and articulation, and political communication.

In Political Science, Structural Functionalism was introduced by Gabriel Almond and Bingham Powell in the 1970s for the purpose of comparative politics, by arguing that understanding a political system requires the understanding of not only its institutions or structures, but also its various functions. Political parties, interest and pressure groups, the legislative, executive, and judicial organs of government, etc; constitute political institutions charged with various mandates and functions. Over several years, structural functionalism has grown, been strengthened, and become one of the dominant theories in sociological and political studies by researchers at various levels.

From the above, it can be deduced that the Nigeria Police is a political institution under the executive arm of government and provided for in the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The Nigeria Police is charged with the primary responsibilities and functions of provision of safety and security of lives and property, maintenance of law and order (rule application) and prosecution of persons who violate the law and commit crimes and criminalities, and in this context, during elections. The extent to which election security can be promoted or guaranteed is largely dependent on the ability of the Nigeria Police to effectively and efficiently perform its functions. To this extent, therefore, Structural Functionalism is the appropriate theoretical framework to analyse the role of

the Nigeria Police with respect to the provision or promotion of election security during the 2023 General Elections in Rivers State.

On the other hand, the Human Security Theory (HST) stresses the need for the protection of individuals and communities from threats to their wellbeing, dignity and survival. It prioritizes the security of people over and above state security; focusing on multidimensional deprivation and oppression. Some of the basic assumptions of HST are that: it is people-centred, comprehensive in character to the extent that it considers a wide range of threats to the people, including political insecurity. It is also interdependent by recognizing connections between different types of threats and their impacts on individuals and communities and it is contextual. Contextuality means that HST considers specific contexts and circumstances that affect human security. HST is also prevention-oriented and strives to protect and empower the people (Commission on Human Security, 2003; UNDP Human Development Report, 1994).

The HST provides a more nuanced understanding and analysis of the role of the Nigeria Police in the promotion of election security, the protection and enforcement of the political and democratic rights of the people especially through elections; respect for their electoral choices, guarantees the integrity of the electoral process, particularly by ensuring the safety of voters, candidates and electoral officials from violence, intimidation and harassment and other forms of electoral fraud. The concept of human security was first proposed by Mahbubul Haq in the United Nations Development Programmes' (UNDP) Human Development Report, 1994. Other proponents of human security include Paul James, Caroline Thomas, G. King and C. Murray and Roland Paris, etc.

Conceptual Explications and Analysis

The conceptual clarifications and analysis will focus on Election, Security and Election Security.

Concept of Election

Elections are the hallmarks of democracy and good governance world over. The act of choosing someone to hold a job or office, often a public one, is called an election, according to Garner (1999). An election, as stated by Shively (1997), is "a choice between candidates or a choice whether or not a particular policy is to be followed". It serves as a mechanism for choosing public officials and policies. The term "election" is also defined as "any election held under this Act and includes a referendum" (Electoral Act, 2022:110). Credible elections play a crucial role in establishing and sustaining a democratic government, including peaceful and seamless transfer of political power from one regime to another. Put differently, the concept of an election enables citizens to participate in the democratic process by expressing their preferences and choosing representatives who will govern with their consent and on their behalf. It promotes transparency, accountability, and peaceful transfer of political power. Elections typically involve campaigning, voter registration, rallies, casting ballots, and the counting of votes to

determine the winners. It is an essential way for citizens to have a voice in shaping the future of their country.

A form of government known as "direct democracy" allows all eligible citizens to vote for candidates of their choice and on major policy issues. However, in majority of contemporary democratic cultures, direct democracy is not the most feasible form of governance. In order to function properly, democratic governance must be carried out by representatives. Elections provide platforms for citizens to exercise a peaceful democratic choice by choosing representatives who will serve their interests (political representation) and who will be held to account for their actions while in office (enforcement of accountability). There may be a lack of accountability when elected political office holders are not concerned about being re-elected or when one coalition, alliance or party is so powerful that voters have little options when it comes to choose of candidates or policies. When elected officials are not concerned with their own re- election prospects, accountability may likely decline.

However, the possibility of assessing the performance and acceptability of leaders through elections facilitate the challenge of leadership succession and continuity, which in turn, aids in the preservation of democratic institutions and enthrones the consciousness and culture of performance in public offices. Also, when elections are competitive, both political parties and candidates are compelled to present their records of performance or accounts of stewardship to the people to enable them determine and decide whether or not to re-elect them. In addition, elections serve the purpose of legitimizing the actions of people who have power, which is a role that is accomplished, to some degree, even by elections that are not contested (i.e. conferring power and legitimacy on elected representatives, parties or government); and reinforce the political community's capacity to maintain stability and credibility (social cohesion). Elections equally serve to connect people with one another and, as a result, validate the sustainability of political systems. As a consequence of this, elections contribute to the smooth integration and consolidation of social and political systems. Furthermore, elections serve a function that is self-actualizing and that validates the value and worth of the citizens. Participating in an election helps voters in a variety of ways, including boosting their self-esteem, self-confidence, respect for themselves and the choice of others. Without more, elections serve the purposes of promotion of democratic values and culture, peaceful resolution of political conflicts and have the potentials to engender lasting electoral reforms (Bork, 2023).

In Nigeria, elections are generally the means by which representatives are chosen to fill elective posts at the federal, state, and local government levels. Many political parties have been formed in Nigeria since the beginning of federal elections in 1959, which were conducted by the Electoral Commission of Nigeria (ECN). It is worthy to state that the first legislative council elections held in Lagos and Calabar in 1922 under the Clifford Constitution. Electoral systems give rise to elections themselves. The act of exercising a choice amongst several options is a prerequisite for election. Ever since the establishment

of the modern concept of representative government in the 17th and 18th centuries, elections have gained a great deal of respect and popularity. Elections are a mechanism of making political decisions by casting votes for candidates, parties, or on issues. They are particularly important in liberal democracies since they are vital to the functioning of the democratic system. It may be deduced from this that voters are provided with a variety of options from which to choose. Therefore, if elections must be genuine means of recruiting political leaders and determination of issues in democratic societies, they must be competitive, open, credible, free and fair. A person chosen or elected in an election is referred to as an "electee", while the person who elects or votes for another is called an "elector". Persons who are qualified to vote in an election are called the electorate or voters (Kalagbor, 2001).

The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the Electoral Act, 2022 are the two major pieces of legislation that guide and control the process of holding elections in Nigeria. As a result of the fact that Nigeria is now operating under a constitutional democracy and presidential form of government, the elections for the presidency and the legislature are conducted concurrently, but independently. Elections for the office of the President, the National and State Assemblies as well as office of the Governors take place once every four years. The Independent National Electoral Commission, often known as INEC, is the electoral authority in Nigeria that is responsible for the organisation and conduct of general elections. The Commission is a constitutionally mandated body that is supposedly autonomous.

The electoral circle is used to operationalise, analyse, or visualise electoral processes and activities in every election (i.e. before, during and after). This can be further broken down into eight (8) major electoral phases such as legal and institutional electoral framework, planning and preparation for implementation or execution of electoral activities, training and education and registration of voters, political parties and election observers. Others are election campaigns, voting operations, announcement of election results and post-election activities. In practice, the electoral cycle may be expressed in terms of timetable and schedule of activities for specific elections. There are various types of elections, depending on the prevailing political or electoral system in place. Some of the popular ones include primary elections, general elections, recall, referendum and plebiscite. Orders are direct and indirect elections, local or municipal elections, parliamentary or legislative elections, presidential and national assembly elections and governorship and state assembly elections, etc; (Garner, 1999; Kalagbor, 2001; CFRN, 1999; Electoral Act, 2022).

It is important to distinguish between Election and Suffrage. Although election and suffrage are related, they are different in the context of politics. Whereas election is the actual process of voting in order to choose representatives or persons to occupy specific leadership positions over a given time or decide on a particular issue. On the other hand, Suffrage is the right to vote in elections or participate in the democratic process of choosing representatives or deciding on issues. Suffrage confers the right to participate in

the decision-making process on the people. Thus, suffrage can be likened to possession of a driver's license, while an election is the act of actual driving. Similarly, Universal Adult Suffrage is the right for all adults to vote or participate in elections, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, social status or class, etc. It aims at ensuring political "equality", inclusivity and discourages political disempowerment and marginalization. Today, the United Nations recognise Universal Adult Suffrage as a fundamental human right and a cornerstone of democratic governance and values.

The Biblical Doctrine of Election

The Biblical Doctrine of Election is anchored on divine choice, selection or preference. It can be likened to the tenet of preferment and educates us that God is involved in making a choice. He chose believers from the beginning and before the foundation of the earth or creation of the world (Ephesians 1:4, John 17:24; 1 Peter 1:20). God's choice is unconditional because of His divine nature, sovereign grace and mercy. Thus, election in the context of the Bible is used in relation to God's people. In Romans 9:14-18, God says, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy...". It is His choice and unquestionable discretion to show or refrain from showing mercy. God's purpose for choosing or electing Christians is for His purpose: to bear fruit and that our fruit may abide or remain (John 15:16; 1 Peter 2:9). The persons whom God chooses; he calls "the elect" of God (Mark 13:20). They are those God has predestined for salvation. God does not choose everybody. Despite the availability and abundance of His grace which can be accessed by all persons, He still chooses and saves some people over others. Most times, God chooses the weak, broken-hearted, hopeless and helpless and uses them to accomplish His purpose; confound and shame the wise and powerful and to attract and teach humility.

The Prescient and Augustinian Views

There are two dominant views on the Biblical Doctrine of Election: The Prescient View and the Augustinian View. The Prescient view which is also known as foreknowledge view states that through the omniscience (all-knowing) power of God, He knows (predestines) those who will believe the gospel, follow Him and be saved. This divine knowledge enables Him to know who will receive and who will not receive Christ and makes His choice based on this knowledge. On the other hand, the Augustinian View is associated with Augustine of Hippo, also known as Saint Augustine, theologian, political and social philosopher. The Augustinian View teaches us that God's election is not necessarily because of His foreknowledge, rather it is based on God's exceeding and sovereign grace. In 1 Peter 2:9-10, God calls the Israelites "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people", whom He called out of darkness into His marvellous light. Out of all the nations of the earth, Israel is God's chosen and special people (corporate election), that is, God's choice of a group of people (Jarett, 2023). These people enjoy God's special status, grace, favour, unmerited privileges, and blessings (Deuteronomy 7:6, 14:2; Psalm 105:43, 135:4). Similarly, all believers are the chosen of God or "God's elect" (Titus 1:1). The Bible is also replete with individual elections by God. In Genesis 18:19, referring to Abraham, God said:

I have chosen him that he may charge his children and his household after him and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken.

God chose Jacob over Esau (Romans 9:10-13, Psalm 135:4). Jacob was chosen even before birth (doctrine of prescient). God also chose Isaac (Genesis 21:12); Paul (Galatians 1:15); Zerubbabel (Haggai 2:23); David as king (1 Samuel 16:12); and Jesus Christ, the elect of the Father (Isaiah 42:1; 1 Peter 2:6). The opposite of election is rejection. God rejected Saul as king of Israel (1 Samuel 16:1), for Saul disobeyed God, became self-seeking and self-assured.

In summary, the Biblical Doctrine of Election is the divine choice or act of God. It favours some people and not everyone and it is based on the sovereign grace, mercy and will of God. It is a source of assurance and expression of God's unconditional love. It is not Calvinism (reformed Christianity), but Biblicism (adherence to the Bible) and glorifies God (Taylor, 2014). It also explains why some people believe and others do not believe (Schrock, 2016). The choice of a person or group of persons may be to fulfil God's purpose, including performing a particular task or assignment or to enter into a divine relationship or covenant with God. Such covenant may be generational or transgenerational. When it comes to providing election security, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) works in conjunction with the Nigeria Police and other security organizations.

The Concept of Security

Security is a multifaceted concept that encompasses various aspects of protection. It is primarily the duty of the United Nations Security Council to ensure that international peace and security are maintained in the world. According to Buzan (1984), security is about being free from danger and the capacity of countries to maintain their independent identities and functional integrity in the face of forces of change that they view as hostile. In other words, security measures the ability of nations to maintain their independence. For Walt (1991), security is concerned with the study of the threat, use and management of military force. Thus, security can be both a theory and practice. It is often considered that security is the absence of danger, anxiety, concern, oppression, or poverty, and the ability to defend, protect, and preserve one's essential values against threats. Also, most people think that security is about being safe from harm. The common understanding of security is that it is the absence or mitigation of threats to highly valued possessions, especially those ones that may jeopardize the very existence of a particular reference item. Therefore, it is possible to draw the conclusion that security, regardless of whether it is traditional or non-traditional, traditional or state-centric, is completely concerned with the protection of resources, both living and non-living, from being stolen or damaged. Kalagbor, Sam-Kalagbor and Okere (2024:250) have stated that "security means protection from or against potential threat, hostility, harm, danger, fear, anxiety, attack, violence, theft, vandalism or death, etc. It is also understood as safety and all measures adopted to guarantee the safety of lives and property".

According to the United Nations, security can be summarized to denote “freedom from fear, freedom from want and dignity”. There are various types of security namely: internal, external or international security; regime security, private/public security, energy and resource security, bio-security, health security, food security and cyber security. Others are physical security, spiritual security, social security, network security and national security; investment and asset security, information and technology security; military security, management security, operational security, financial security and human security. Accordingly, the United Nations Development Programme Human Development Report (1994: 23), defines human security as “...safety from chronic threats such as hunger, disease and repression, and protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the pattern of daily lives, whether in homes, jobs or communities”. Human security primarily aims at the protection of the lives and property of the people and their communities. It is a deliberate attempt at humanization of security (Debiel & Klein, 1988). The seven pillars or elements of human security are economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, community security, personal security and political security. (Abolorin, 2011; Adedoyin 2013. Ezonbi & Jonah, 2018; Ugwu & Omotola, 2022).

The Concept of Election Security

The concept of Election Security is not very popular and as such, there is very limited literature on the subject. However, Election Security is not only a critical component of political security, it is also part of the electoral process and management. It is the concern of security agencies, electoral umpires, observers, the media and other electoral stakeholders, including the public election security remains a major challenge in many democracies, particularly in Nigeria (Olurode, 2013). Election security is crucial in ensuring the integrity and fairness of elections. Fischer (2002) asserts, that “election security can be defined as the process of protecting electoral stakeholders, information, facilities and events”. It involves implementing measures to protect voting systems from cyberattacks, ensuring accurate voter registration to prevent fraud, and safeguarding the entire election process, including the handling and counting of ballots. By addressing vulnerabilities and implementing robust security protocols, election security aims to maintain public trust and confidence in the democratic process. Election Security must also include comprehensive security plans and measures: deployment of professional and adequate security personnel, protecting the lives of the officials and property of the electoral body; voters and candidates, the public and prevention of electoral violence including, but not limited to, rigging, kidnapping, arson, shooting, etc. In order to guarantee an effective election security system, the electoral body, observers (local and international), civil society and human rights organisations, political party agents, the public and other stakeholders are expected to give credible information to the police in the course of intelligence gathering and provide other legitimate support where necessary. Emphasizing the importance of Election Security in election management, the former Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Jega (2012) stated:

When it comes to the conduct of elections that are free, fair, and trustworthy, security is absolutely necessary. The whole of the

election process is constrained by security concerns, which include the provision of fundamental safety measures for voters during political party rallies and campaigns, as well as the protection of result forms. Electoral security is very necessary in order to establish the appropriate atmosphere. However, election security is a problem that cannot be left only to security agencies and election management authorities; all other stakeholders, including the media, the National Orientation Agency, Community Leaders, and Civil Society Organizations, among others, have a key role to play in the process of ensuring the voting environment.

Onapajo (2015; 2020) has also stressed the importance of improving election security at all the stages of the electoral process as constituting a major ingredient for effective electoral reforms. Election Security is used to designate the safeguard or protection of the integrity and credibility of all election processes from any form of threat, harm or manipulation, including electoral infrastructure, materials and results. It also extends to the protection of all electoral activities, personnel, candidates, voters and the public (NPS Election Security Management for Police Commanders, 2022). Accordingly, a former Inspector General of Police in Nigeria, Arase (2022) contends that:

For this reason, election security may be seen as the system or strategy that is meant to provide safety and protection from any kind of obstacle or hitch that has the potential to distort or jeopardize the conduct of elections that are free, fair, and credible. It includes what might be regarded as the process of safeguarding voters, candidates, polling officials, media, election observers, election materials, data, and infrastructure in general against death, damage, destruction, and other forms of harm that may occur during elections.

Election Security can be located at three levels, namely: pre-election, election and post-election security activities. Generally, some factors that are capable of constituting threats to election security include lack of professional conduct by security agencies, non-compliance with electoral laws and guidelines; poverty, illiteracy, ignorance, corruption and intimidation of electoral officers and voters. Others are the compromise of electoral processes, cultism and threat of violence, manipulation of election results and illegal campaign financing. etc. In essence, Election Security must take into consideration physical and non-physical elements, all electoral stakeholders, electoral activities, processes, facilities and materials, communication and information systems, etc. The effective delivery of election security, especially by the police should be guided by principles such as:

1. Maintaining a peaceful and secure electoral environment and preservation of law and order;
2. Impartiality by the police;
3. Police officers should be held accountable for their actions or inactions and must

- protect human rights; and
4. The police must carry out their election duties in accordance with the rule of law (NPS Election Security Management Manual for Police Commanders, 2022).

Legal, Statutory and Institutional Frameworks for Election Security

There are legal, statutory and institutional frameworks that are relevant to the role of the Nigeria Police in the promotion of election security which are also applicable to Rivers State. They include the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (CFRN) (as amended) which is not only the grandmom (i.e. the fundamental principles upon which the laws of the Nigerian state are founded or the source of every law and authority in Nigeria, it is the foremost legal instrument) on elections in the country. Section 214 of the Constitution provides for the establishment of the Nigerian Police. In addition to the constitutional provisions, there are various laws and regulations that further define the role of the police. They include the Nigeria Police Act, 2020; the Criminal Code; the Administration of Criminal Justice Act, etc. Specifically, by the combined provisions of the section 3 (I) and 4 of the Nigeria Police Act, the Police shall be subject to the provisions of the Constitution. Both the Constitution and the Nigeria Police Act define the powers, functions and responsibilities of the Police in maintaining law and order, protecting lives and property and ensuring the safety and security of Nigerians.

The Electoral Act, 2022, provides general and specific guidelines for the conduct of elections, and the role of security officials, including the Police before, during and after elections. It stresses the need for security officials to maintain peace and security during elections, prevent commission of electoral offences and ensure a safe environment for voters. The Act through the manual release by INEC also outlines the powers of the Police to arrest and prosecute persons involved in electoral offences. One of the fundamental provisions of the Act which sets the basis for elections is contained in section 26 (1) of the Act. It provides for affirmation or swearing to an oath of loyalty and neutrality and non-acceptance of bribe or gratification by electoral officers and security officials involved in election duties.

Similarly, INEC's Election Security Manual (2011) makes elaborate provisions to guide the Police and other security agencies for the purpose of provision of election security. Nwolise (2012) has identified eight (8) key areas of election security foci by the Police, namely: security of voters' register, electoral materials, security of INEC offices, officials and staff; security of national borders, security of votes, security of the street, security of the ballot and security of the people's verdict and the integrity of the elections. Furthermore, the Code of Conduct and Rules of Engagement for Security Personnel on Electoral Duty (2020) produced by the INEC offers a standardized set of guidelines for security personnel who are engaged in election duties, including the Police. The Nigeria Police have what are referred to as "Police Documents" such as Force Orders and Standard Operating Procedures. They provide comprehensive instructions on various aspects of policing such as crime prevention, investigations, community policing and handling of public protests. The guidelines emphasize the principles of professionalism, accountability and respect for human rights, etc. (Sam-Kalagbor, 2024).

The Nigeria Police, Security Administration and Management of the 2023 General Elections in Rivers State

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) conducted general elections into various elective positions in Rivers State, including the offices of the President, members of the National Assembly, Governorship and State Houses of Assembly respectively. Whereas the Presidential and National Assembly elections held on 25th February 2023, the Governorship and State House of Assembly elections were conducted on 18th March 2023. The Governorship and State Houses of Assembly elections were postponed from the earlier date of 11th March, 2023 (Oyekanmi, 2022). Seventeen political parties and governorship candidates contested the governorship elections. The security agencies, particularly the Nigeria Police played a significant role before, during and after the elections, especially by providing the needed security in order to ensure peaceful, free, fair, transparent and credible elections to further consolidate democracy in Rivers State. The Nigeria Police mobilized personnel, materials and equipment and provided security for the elections. A Joint Election Monitoring Task Force was also constituted in the 23 local government areas to monitor the elections and coordinate election related activities in the state. Notwithstanding the presence and role of the police before, during and after the entire elections, there were evidence of threats, violence and election fraud, especially manipulation of election results in certain polling units and collation centres across the state. The 2023 general election was equally militarized in the state, owing to the overbearing presence of the military at the INEC headquarters in Port Harcourt, with the intention to rig both the presidential and gubernatorial elections allegedly in favour of the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) at the federal level. Unfortunately, they were resisted by the people with the help of the police. In all, the 2023 general elections in Rivers State were largely peaceful, compared to the 2015 and 2019 general elections.

In order to guarantee effective election security ahead of the 2023 General Elections in Rivers State, five (5) Commissioners of Police, namely: Yomi Olarenwaju, Samuel Musa, Lanre Sikiru and Aderemi Adeoye were redeployed to Rivers State. They were to be supervised by the then Assistant Inspector General of Police in charge of Zone 13, Akwa, Yaro Abutu. A total of 15,544 police officers, including those from Special Protection and Counter Terrorism Units, supported by the military and sister security agencies were deployed to police a total of 4,422 polling units in the state. Human and vehicular movements were restricted in the state from 12.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m. on election days. Security aids to Very Important Persons (VIPs) and escorts accompanying politicians were temporarily withdrawn. In any case, persons on essential services such as officials of INEC, election observers, local and international, accredited media personnel and emergency medical and other service providers were exempted. Also, prior to the election, the Police had embarked upon public sensitization, enlightenment, education and appeals on the need for peaceful conducts before, during and after the elections (Sanusi & Naku, 2023). During the elections, the police played a crucial role in maintaining law and order, ensuring the safety of voters, election officials, and political party candidates. They were responsible for implementing security measures to prevent any form of violence, intimidation, or electoral malpractices. The police deployed

personnel to polling units to provide security and maintain peace. They worked alongside other security agencies to create a safe environment for voters to exercise their democratic rights. Voting materials and results sheets, among other sensitive election documents, were transported and safeguarded by the police. The election processes and activities were quite intense. Generally, they involved voter registration, political campaigns, rallies, polling or voting, votes counting, and result declaration. The state witnessed high levels of political engagements and participation from the residents. The entire events had their fair share of challenges and controversies, but overall, it was a significant milestone on the state's political landscape.

In 2023, general elections in Rivers State took place in the 23 local government areas, 319 political wards and 3,215 polling units. These polling units played a crucial role in determining the outcomes of the elections by capturing the votes of the electorate across the state. During the elections, several political parties presented candidates to compete for various elective positions. Some of the prominent parties that participated included the People's Democratic Party (PDP), All Progressives Congress (APC), Labour Party (LP), and the Social Democratic Party (SDP). The results declaration and verification processes were quite challenging. After the voting ended, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) officials collated the results from different polling units, wards and local government collation centres. The Commission ensured that the results were authentic and free from any form of manipulation, despite allegations of irregularities and manipulations by agents of some political parties. Political party agents and candidates had the opportunity to observe the collation processes at the polling units, ward, local government and state collation centres respectively to ensure transparency. Once the results were compiled and collated, they were officially announced by INEC, and the winners were declared based on the highest number of votes received. It was a crucial step in the election process to ensure the integrity and legitimacy of the outcomes.

At the conclusion of the governorship elections, INEC declared Siminalayi Fubara, the governorship candidate of the People's Democratic Party (PDP), the winner and the duly elected Governor of Rivers State. He scored 302, 614 votes to win the election (INEC, 2023). With respect to the State House of Assembly elections, all the 32 seats were won by the candidates of the People's Democratic Party, PDP. The presidential election was held in the country, including Rivers State, on February 25, 2023. The final results of the election as announced by INEC showed that Ahmed Bola Tinubu of the All Progressives Congress won the election in Rivers State, a PDP controlled state, with 231,591 votes to defeat candidates of the other political parties. However, the candidates of the PDP won the elections in the three Senatorial Districts of the state as well as 11 out of the 13 Federal House of Representatives elections.

One defining feature of the run-up to Nigeria's 2023 General Elections was the increasing engagement of young people in the electoral process. This was primarily caused by the important clauses in the Electoral Act, 2022, which were created to increase stakeholders' faith and confidence in the way elections are conducted. This was especially true with the

introduction of two key technologies: The Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) and the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) Results Viewing Portal (IReV). The BVAS was developed with the purpose of verifying and confirming the genuine identification of voters. The IReV made it possible for election results to be posted and seen by anybody who had access to the internet and the INEC's IReV portal. This provided the public with the opportunity to examine the election results and make INEC personnel accountable for any anomalies that might have happened. Nevertheless, a number of reports revealed that the electoral process was beset by several problems and anomalies, in spite of the efforts of numerous stakeholders to ensure legitimate elections. A number of important concerns surfaced as a result of the elections, to wit: lack of proper planning and preparation by the Commission, including inadequate training and selective use of the BVAS, lack of transparency and accountability and low voter turnout. These had some security implications for the general elections.

Misconducts of the Nigeria Police during the 2023 General Elections

Notwithstanding the arrest of 68 suspects by the police in Rivers State, for various electoral offences during the general elections (The Nation, November 22, 2023) among other brilliant performance by some police personnel on election duties, there were sundry reported cases of misconduct by the Nigeria Police in the media during the 2023 General Elections in Rivers State. According to Achi (2023), the Nigeria Police in Rivers State aided brazen electoral heist, falsification of election results, violence, ballot box snatching, voter intimidation and voter suppression. Rivers State was reportedly the worst in terms of direct involvement of the Police in electoral fraud. Also, Naku and Sanusi (2023), reported that a reporter with The Punch, Gbenga Oloniran, was arrested and assaulted by the police while he was on election duty in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State. To confirm that the police in Rivers and other States were involved in different misconducts during the 2023 General Elections, Ejike (2023), reported that after the elections and submission of the report of the police monitoring team on misconducts in the thirty-six states of the Federation and the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, the Police Service Commission (PSC) was studying the report for consideration and necessary actions. In discussing the misconducts of the police during the 2023 General Elections, we are referring to behaviours that are considered to be unacceptable and unprofessional as far as the discharge of their role and responsibilities are concerned. Such behaviours include, but are not limited to the following:

- 1. Failure to Respond to Voter Intimidation** – One of the misconducts and blunders recorded on the part of the police during the 2023 elections was its failure to swiftly respond to voter intimidation. Many voters were reported to have been intimidated at their polling units. The failure of the police to swiftly respond to their calls emboldened thuggery and election violence in such areas.
- 2. Aiding and Abetting Crimes Perpetrated by Politicians** – Many eyewitnesses report showed that the police were untowardly used by politicians. Some police personnel were alleged to have carried out the biddings of some politicians and agents of political parties.

3. **Escorting Notable Politicians to Polling Units** – During the elections, some police officers were seen escorting their principals, notable politicians and political office holders to their polling units. This was a breach of the directive given to them and it constituted misconduct because it amounted to indiscipline and disrespect to orders given by constituted authorities.
4. **Misuse of Firearms** – Some overzealous police officers during the elections, misused firearms in their possession. They took laws into their hands by opening fire at unarmed citizens, thereby causing panic as people scampered for their lives, particularly at collation centres, in flagrant disregard of the law and violation of their actual role during the elections.
5. **False Allegation and Illegal Arrest of APC Lawyers** – On Saturday April 11, 2023, some lawyers representing the All Progressives Congress (APC) and its gubernatorial candidate, Tonye Cole, at the election tribunal were illegally arrested by the police in Rivers State. They were accused of printing of materials suspected to be fake election materials. The police by this act were accused of partisanship.
6. **Violation of Right to Press Freedom** – The police were reported to have assaulted some journalists on election duties, destroyed their equipment and violated their rights to press freedom. For instance, Gbenga Oloniran of The Punch was arrested by a team of police officers in Obio Akpor. He was beaten and bundled into a van. However, he was released after the matter was reported to some higher authorities of the police command (Naku & Sanusi, 2023).

Challenges of Good Policing during the 2023 General Elections

There were many challenges that confronted the Nigeria Police in the provision of security before, during and after the 2023 General Elections in Rivers State. Prominent among those challenges were the following:

1. Political Interference

One of the major challenges was political interference in the operations of the police during the elections. This manifested in various ways, such as pressure and monetary inducements to favour a particular political party or candidate, leading to compromised neutrality and fairness on the part of the police. The donation of vehicles, flying boats and provision of other logistical support to the Nigeria Police, Rivers State Command by the Government of Rivers State were perceived by certain sections of the media and opposition political parties as political interference and an indirect way of influencing the police to favour the ruling political party in the state during the elections.

2. Inadequate Training and Resources

Police officers may face challenges due to inadequate training and resources. Insufficient training in election security protocols, conflict resolution, crowd control and management can hinder their ability to effectively handle election-related situations. Limited resources, including equipment, vehicles and personnel, can also impact their effectiveness. These also presented challenges to effective policing during the 2023 General Elections in Rivers State.

3. Partisan Policing

Another challenge was the actual occurrence of partisan policing, where some police personnel covertly aligned themselves with a particular political party, agents of political parties and candidates with the intention to compromise the electoral process. This undermined public trust and confidence in the police, leading to a lack of cooperation and increased tensions during the elections. This also resulted in unsubstantiated allegations of partisan policing during the elections in the state.

4. Violence and Intimidation

The elections were largely characterised by some level of violence and intimidation, which posed significant challenges to good policing. Acts of violence, such as clashes between rival political factions/groups or attacks on voters, required prompt and effective police response to restore normalcy, public confidence and guarantee law and order. The widespread violence and intimidation of voters as well as lack of confidence in the capacity of the police to protect the people largely accounted for the political apathy and low voter turnout during the elections.

5. Ineffective Communication and Coordination

Effective communication and coordination among different security agencies involved in election security, including the police, was crucial. Lack of proper communication channels and coordination in some voting centres, especially in the rural areas led to delays in response and inefficiency in addressing emergency security challenges.

6. Voter Suppression and Electoral Fraud

There were instances of voter suppression and electoral fraud with the police being indifferent or helpless. Ensuring the integrity of the electoral process and protecting the rights of voters always require vigilance and proactive measures by the Police. The Guardian of 27 February, 2023, reported that angry youths in Rivers State protested against alleged manipulation of the presidential election results in the Rivers State.

7. Infiltration of Criminal Elements

The presence and infiltration of criminal elements during the elections posed additional challenges for the police. Organized crime groups, such as political thugs and armed gangs, using covert means, disrupted the electoral process in some polling units and created an atmosphere of fear and insecurity which resulted in apathy and low voter turnout in some voting centres. The Premium Times of February 25, 2023, reported that some political thugs disrupted Presidential and National Assembly elections in parts of Port Harcourt, particularly in some polling units in wards 5, 9 and 10 in the Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State.

8. Public Perception, Lack of Trust and Confidence

Building and maintaining public trust in the Police are essential for effective policing during elections. Negative public perception, stemming from past incidents of police misconducts, involvement in election malpractices; brutality, acts of intimidation,

harassment or corruption obviously undermined cooperation and support by the people and generally hindered the police's ability to carry out their duties effectively with respect to the electoral process.

9. Poor Remuneration and Conditions of Service

Generally, the police are poorly paid in Nigeria, with unfavourable conditions of service. The officers operate without life assurance policy coverage. This is definitely a disincentive to inspire the workers to take reasonable risks or put their lives in danger in the performance of election duties. The Police in virtually all the polling units in the state received refreshments and financial favours from the ruling party and politicians. This was capable of exerting negative impact on effective policing during the elections.

10. Poor Funding

The Police in Nigeria in general and Rivers State in particular, are poorly funded. This also has implications for their performance even during elections. This view is held by many Nigerians, including retired and serving police officers. For instance, a former Minister of Police Affairs, Mohammed Dingyadi, was quoted to have remarked that the sum of /#871.3 billion budgetary allocations to the police in the 2023 budget was inadequate. The call for increased funding of the police was equally expressed by the former Governor of Rivers State and current Minister of the Federal Capital Territory, Nyesom Wike (Daily Nigerian, November 8, 2023; Business Day, May 29, 2023).

11. Poor welfare of Police Officers

Despite the paltry election duty allowances paid to the police personnel, in several cases, the allowances were either delayed for a long time, reduced by higher authorities or not paid at all. This could be frustrating, discouraging and capable of negatively influencing some police personnel to compromise their integrity and professionalism for monetary or other material benefits.

12. Militarisation of the Elections

Militarisation of elections is gradually becoming a regular feature of democratic transitions in the country. The Report of Nigeria's 2019 General Elections stated that "the Situation Room noted military involvement in the elections outside of the limits allowed by law". Specifically, in Rivers State, the military was visibly involved in the election in an attempt to favour the ruling political party at the centre. According to the former Governor of Rivers State, Nyesom Wike, the Nigerian Army staged a coup against Rivers State during the 2019 General Elections, describing their actions as the worst in the nation's democratic history (channelstv.com). During the 2023 general elections, the military was also deployed to Rivers State to aid the main opposition party in the state, the All-Progressives Congress, to manipulate the elections in its favour. Unfortunately, the people resisted them.

13. Corruption

Perhaps, the Nigeria Police more than any other public agency in Nigeria has been openly

accused of pervasive corruption. The corrupt tendencies of the police are often expressed during elections. Many of the police personnel were accused of being easily influenced by politicians who offered them huge sums of money in order to facilitate manipulation of elections in their favour. The services of some were also procured as witnesses before election petition tribunals. No doubt, the 2023 General Elections in Rivers State had their share. Given the clandestine circumstances under which such transactions are conducted, it is extremely difficult to obtain concrete evidence to prove allegations of bribery and corruption involving the police during elections.

14. Non-Compliance with the Provisions of the Electoral Act

The non-compliance with the provisions of the Electoral Act constituted another major challenge on the part of INEC officials, the police and other security agencies and voters. In many instances, the Act was observed in breach. In some polling units, elections did not commence as scheduled due to late arrival of electoral materials but closed before the appointed time. In some cases, sensitive election materials such as the original result sheets could not be found. In certain polling units where they were available, only counterpart original result sheets were given to the unit or ward collation officers. These generated controversies and further delayed commencement of the elections. The use of the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) for accreditation and real time transmission of results to IReV was not strictly complied with by INEC officials. In fact, many of the BVAS machines malfunctioned on election days or could not function due to low batteries capacity. In other instances, some ill-trained electoral officials could not operate the machines. The non-compliance with the BVAS technology by the electoral official during the 2023 General Elections, despite INEC's repeated assurance of its functionality and reliability to guarantee the integrity of the electoral process elicited the highest criticism from opposition political parties, human rights and civil society organizations professional associations, election observers and members of the general public. Many citizens also lost confidence in INEC and called for the resignation of the Chairman, Prof. Mahmood Yakubu. It also became an issue for determination during election petition proceedings at the election tribunals. In support of this. Uwaezuoke and Nwobu (2023) remarked that contrary to INEC's promise, it jettisoned the use of BVAS technology during the 2023 general elections, especially the final function of transmission of the election results to the IReV portal for ease of verification during collation. Indeed, this fundamental breach laid the foundation for various manipulation of the elections processes and created security threats to the election and the police.

Conclusion

It is essential to reiterate the relevance and importance of security in the conduct of credible elections in Rivers State. The Nigeria Police play a pivotal role in maintaining law and order, preventing violence, ensuring the safety of voters, candidates, and election officials, materials as well as safeguarding the integrity of the electoral process. In the context of Nigeria in general and Rivers State in particular, where elections can be challenging and contentious, the role of the Nigeria Police becomes even more critical to ensure free, fair, and credible elections. Focusing on the Nigeria Police in the 2023 General

Elections in Rivers State provided a specific case study to analyse the effectiveness of the security strategies and measures implemented during the elections. The 2023 General Elections were significant in Rivers State, known for its complex political dynamics, posed unique challenges for the police. Analysing the performance of the Nigeria Police during these elections involved assessing various aspects. This included their preparedness, deployment strategies, response to security threats, collaboration with other security agencies, adherence to electoral laws, handling of election-related offences, and overall impact on the conduct of the elections in the state. Moreover, examining the specific challenges faced by the Nigeria Police in Rivers State during the general elections shed light on the complexities of ensuring adequate and effective election security in a diverse and politically charged environment. In all, appraising the role of the Nigeria Police in promoting election security during the general elections in the state provided valuable insights into the challenges and successes of the Police in safeguarding the electoral process; highlighted the need for continuous evaluation, training, and collaboration among security agencies to enhance their effectiveness in promoting election security. By critically analyzing the strategies, performance, and the role of the police, the paper identified areas for improvement and best practices to enhance effective election security administration and management in future elections in the State. This will help uphold our democratic values, ensure credible and peaceful elections, and foster public trust in the entire electoral process.

Recommendations

In order to ensure adequate and more effective police security during future elections in Rivers State, the following recommendations are hereby made:

1. the training and capacity development of the police security personnel involved in election duties should be enhanced by focusing on areas such as crime prevention, intelligence and information gathering, conflict resolution, crowd control and management. Regular workshops and simulations will help to improve the skills, competencies and preparedness of the police;
2. the police should foster better cooperation and coordination among security agencies, establish clearly defined lines of communication, information sharing, and joint operations to address multifaceted security threats effectively. The police should also collaborate with traditional, community leaders and other stakeholders to promote peaceful elections;
3. the police should emphasize and promote the importance of neutrality and professionalism among security personnel. Strict disciplinary measures should be put in place to deter any form of bias, corruption, or political interference. Public trust and confidence in the police personnel on election duties are crucial for effective performance;
4. the police should conduct comprehensive voter education advocacy, sensitisation and enlightenment campaigns to raise awareness about the importance of peaceful elections and the role of the police. One of the major advantages of this strategy is to reduce tensions, minimize misunderstandings, and encourage active voter turnout and participation in elections;

5. the police should establish a dedicated and functional hotline(s) or helpline(s) to enable members of the public to report any security threat, breach or incidents relating to the elections. This will enable prompt response and action from the police in order to guarantee a safe and secure electoral environment;
6. there is the need for the police to closely monitor political campaigns and activities of political parties by implementing INEC's Code of Conduct & Rules of Engagement for Security Personnel on Election Duty to prevent hate speeches, incitement to violence, and the use of inflammatory language. This will help identify and address any potential security risks;
7. special salary and welfare packages should be approved and implemented for the Nigeria police to discourage officers and men from indulging in bribery and corruptions and in order to enhance their reliability and performance. Life assurance policy should be introduced to cover all officers and men of the Nigerian Police; especially those on election duties; and,
8. the Federal Government should carry out radical reforms in the structure and operations of the Nigeria Police. Recruitment into the police should not be politicised. Instead, it should be based on merit. Promotions and postings, particularly for election duties should be based on seniority, competence, experience and proven record of outstanding professional performance. Unbundling the police by constitutionally empowering the states to establish state police could be a viable alternative that may be considered and explored.

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