

SEPARATIST AGITATION IN SOUTH-EAST NIGERIA AND THE RISE OF UNKNOWN-GUNMEN AS A NEW SECURITY THREAT IN THE REGION

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Abstract

Essentially, the rise of the unknown gunmen (UGM) in southeast Nigeria is posing a new security threat in the region. The security challenge from UGM in the region is, however, problematic as the UGM are faceless and cannot be identified, unlike other criminal and/or terrorist groups (like Boko-Haram, bandits, and militants), who constantly affirm the terrorist activities or crimes they commit. However, no group has owned up to the crimes committed in the region occasioned by UGM. This position has necessitated this study's essence as no scholarly interrogations exist on the subject matter. The study adopted explanatory research design, documentary method of data collection, qualitative data analysis, and fragile state theory as the beacon of analysis. The study concluded that it is vital that the Nigerian state call for a referendum of all the regions to ascertain their intentions to remain as one country to give or pave way for true federalism, state police and fiscal federalism. The study suggested thus, the federal government and states in the region should begin to fashion enduring solutions, not the knee-jerk/reactionary approach that has been applied. Security operatives must scale up intelligence to tackle the trend, as it is worrisome that no meaningful arrests have been made on the attacks that started in the region since 2020 and counting.

Keywords: Separatist agitation; Unknown gunmen; Security threat; South-East; Eastern Security Network (ESN).

Introduction

Nigeria is a tripodal state with the Igbo people in the east of the Niger; the Hausa people in the plains of the vast north; while the Yoruba people are the inhabitants of the western region of the territory christened Nigeria by Flora Shaw under the instance of Lord Fredrick Lugard after the amalgamation of the northern and southern protectorates in 1914. The amalgamation had other sub-major and minor ethnic groups in the marriage of the new entity. The trio (Igbo, Hausa, and Yoruba), amidst other ethnic nationalities existed together, suffered under the harsh colonial rule and policies, fought together in the various decolonisation processes against their common enemy (colonialism).

Just after Nigeria's flag-independence in 1st October 1960, there existed mutual suspicion amongst the trio that was precipitated by the coup and counter coup of January and July 1966 respectively, that later snow-balled into the Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970), leaving untold hardship and devastation of lives and properties of the Igbo people in the south-east region. The Igbo people lost the 1967-1970 Nigerian Civil War during which they attempted to secede from Nigeria and establish an independent state of Biafra. There remains residual support for the independence of Biafra among the Igbos. Many Igbos, who are mostly Christian, consider that they have been disadvantaged for some decades now which became

glaring under the current Muslim-dominated Nigerian government led by Muhammadu Buhari (Council on Foreign Relations, 2021). Biafra secessionism is also attributable to the Nigerian police abuses, extortions, and arbitrary arrests and detentions of people in the south-eastern states (Ezeamalu & Maclean, 2021).

Albeit, there exists notable separatist agitation (groups) in the south-east, with the most prominent as Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) and the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB). IPOB which is in the front burner of the agitation was founded by Nnamdi Kanu. According to the Council on Foreign Relations (2021), the federal government, recalling the civil war, is bitterly opposed to Igbo separatism. The federal government has long sought to defang the IPOB and silence Nnamdi Kanu, through illegal or quasi-legal methods. Since 2017, the IPOB is designated and/or proscribed by the Nigerian government as a terrorist organization (The Guardian, 2021).

Since August 2020, violence has been escalating between the IPOB and the Nigerian government and her security forces. In August 2020, Nigerian police forces executed 21 IPOB members at a meeting, with two police officers dead and both sides accused each other of firing the first shot. Violence escalated during the following months, leading to a region-wide insurgency (The Observer, 2021).

Similarly, in the wake of continuous killings by Fulani herdsmen, the IPOB formed the Eastern security Network (ESN) in December 2020, as a reaction to the Igbo's perception that they are targeted by Muslim Fulani herders, whom they accuse of grazing on farmlands and committing crimes against farm/land owners and local residents. The movement then transformed into a paramilitary unit with broader functions (Bloomberg.com, 2021). The Nigerian government saw the ESN as a threat to its authority and deployed the army to locate and destroy ESN bases. In January 2021, intense fighting broke out in the town of Orlu, in Imo State. The military confrontation lasted for seven days, until ESN declared a unilateral ceasefire and both sides withdrew from the town (Sahara Reporters, 2021).

Shortly after the Orlu Crisis, IPOB gave all the governors of southeast Nigeria 14 days to ban open grazing, threatening to deploy the ESN to enforce a ban if the governors did not do so (Sahara Reporters, 2021). However, the ESN did not wait for the 14 days to come; a few days later, ESN operatives attacked a Fulani camp in Isuikwuato, Abia State, killing their livestock and burning down their houses. Following the raid, the governors of the southeast states, responded by heeding the ESN's call on the ban on open grazing (Sahara Reporters, 2021).

IPOB accused the Nigerian Army of working in collaboration with the governor of Imo state to continue the harassment and intimidation of civilians in Orlu and environs, especially the arrest of a Rabbi and his family members, whom it was reported were being tortured. Beginning from 15th February 2021 there were reports of the Nigerian army sending reinforcements to Orlu. On the 18th of February 2021 Nigeria Military launched an airstrike in Orlu, Imo state; the IPOB issued a swift statement through its State Directorate asserting that “federal government has finally brought the war upon the Biafran people” (Sahara Reporters, 2021).

In response to the deaths of 20 security personnel in the region in early 2021 by unknown gunmen, including the destruction of three police stations, Nigerian forces raided an ESN camp in Aba, Abia on the night of 23rd March 2021. The Nigerian force, numbering hundreds, captured the camp and claimed to have killed 16 ESN fighters. On 29th March the Nigerian police reported arresting 16 ESN members suspected of attacking security personnel (SaharaReporters, 2021).

On April 5th 2021, at around 2 AM, a prison in Owerri, Imo State, was attacked by unknown-gun-men who

used explosives to open the administrative buildings, and then opened the inmates' cells. The prison security fled, and 1,844 inmates escaped. An attempt to enter the armoury at the nearby police headquarters was deterred. The Nigerian police blamed the attack on the Eastern Security Network (ESN). The IPOB however denied any involvement in the act. By the following day, six of the escaped prisoners had voluntarily returned to the prison (Sahara Reports, 2021).

The security crisis in the southeast region took different turn as captured above due to reasons put forward by the IPOB supporters, whose annoyance is connected to the arrest and detention of their leader (Nnamdi Kanu), whose quest is to lead and liberate the Igbo people from killer herdsmen, and Fulanization/Islamization of the whole country by the northern oligarchs. In view of the wide range of risks of the events in the south-east, it is worthy to note that the security of any state has several dimensions, including economic security, energy security, physical security, environmental security, food security, border security, and cyber security.

These security dimensions enunciated above correlate closely with elements of national power which is the major bone of contention amongst the tripodal regions in Nigeria. As a corollary to the security dimensions mentioned above, the fear of the 'sit-at-home' order issued by the IPOB handlers has great impact on the economic security and physical security of the region, even though it is a solidarity move to pressure the federal government to free Nnamdi Kanu from incarceration, its economic and physical consequences are gobsmacking. To the greatest chagrin, it has been fingered that the enforcers of the sit-at-home order in the region are the unknown-gun-men, in some quarters, the ESN, who have been accused by the federal government as the harbinger of the wanton killings of prominent men, women, politicians, destruction of public facilities and private properties in the region. It has also been averred that the unknown-gun-men are sponsored criminals from the north and federal government, who have been ordered to cause mayhem in the region in order to put the blame on IPOB and ESN and further tag or strengthen the proscription of the group as terrorist in nature. However, these new security threats in the region and the accusations levelled against the ESN as UGM, coincided with the establishment of the group by IPOB.

Alas! The rise of the unknown-gun-men is posing a new security threat in the south-east region of Nigeria. The security challenge from UGM in the region is however problematic as the UGM are faceless and cannot be identified just like other terrorist groups (like Boko-Haram, Bandits, and Militants), who always affirm to the terrorist activities or crimes they are accused of. But no group has owned-up to the crimes committed in the region. Theoretically, there exist a dearth in scholarly literature on the subject matter, as there is no scholarly work on the recent security menace in the southeast posed by UGM. Based on the established backdrop, the paper seeks to analyse the new security threat in south-east Nigeria posed by the unknown-gun-men (UGM).

Conceptual Clarifications

Unknown-Gun-Men

The concept of unknown gun-men has recently become a catch phrase on the lips of Nigerians and security experts. The concept is a combination of three key words, viz., unknown, gun and men. These words are fused together to form the phrase of unknown gun-men. Essentially, unknown gunmen refer to unidentified or faceless wielders of arms that wreak havoc in the society/state. The crimes or activities of these criminals are not claimed by any terrorist groups. Thus, it is difficult or impossible to detect or identify these criminals.

National Security Threat

National security or national defence is the security and defence of a nation state, including its citizens, economy, and institutions, which is regarded as a duty of government. Fundamentally speaking national security was conceived as protection against military attack from other country, but national security is now widely understood to include also non-military dimensions, including the security from terrorism, minimization of crime, economic security, energy security, environmental security, food security, cyber-security etc. Similarly, national security risks include, in addition to the actions of other nation states, action by violent non-state actors, by narcotic cartels, and by multinational corporations, and also the effects of natural disasters.

Essentially, states rely on a range of measures, including political, economic, and military power, as well as diplomacy, to safeguard the security of their territories. They may also act to build the conditions of security regionally and internationally by reducing transnational causes of insecurity, such as climate change, economic inequality, political exclusion, and nuclear proliferation.

The concept of national security remains ambiguous, having evolved from simpler definitions which emphasised freedom from military threat and from political coercion. Among the many definitions proposed to date are the following, which show how the concept has evolved to encompass non-military concerns (Romm, 1993).

According to Paleri (2008), a nation has security when it does not have to sacrifice its legitimate interests to avoid war, and is able, if challenged, to maintain them by war. The distinctive meaning of national security means freedom from foreign dictation. National security objectively means the absence of threats to acquired values and subjectively, the absence of fear that such values will be attacked (Paleri, 2008). National security then is the ability to preserve the nation's physical integrity and territory; to maintain its economic relations with the rest of the world on reasonable terms; to preserve its nature, institution, and governance from disruption from outside; and to control its borders (Maier, 1990). Maier (1990), went on to surmise that national security is best described as a capacity to control those domestic and foreign conditions that the public opinion of a given community believes necessary to enjoy its own self-determination or autonomy, prosperity, and wellbeing.

National security is an appropriate and aggressive blend of political resilience and maturity, human resources, economic structure and capacity, technological competence, industrial base and availability of natural resources and finally the military might. National security is the measurable state of the capability of a nation to overcome the multi-dimensional threats to the apparent well-being of its people and its survival as a nation-state at any given time, by balancing all instruments of state policy through governance and is extendable to global security by variables external to it (Paleri, 2008). For Brown (1983), national and international security may be understood as shared freedom from fear and want, and the freedom to live in dignity. It implies social and ecological health rather than the absence of risk and is a common right.

Theoretical Framework

The study adopted Fragile State theory as its theoretical beacon of analysis. Fragile state, similar to failed, weak or collapsed states, is an analytical category that originated in the work of Migdal (1988), and gained prominence from the mid 1990s onwards and got further traction after the 9/11 terrorist attacks in United States. Fundamentally, proponents of the theory, policy-makers, and academics alike hold that the

potential for contemporary conflict is harboured within the state, not between states (Midgal, 1988). Proponents of the theory include: David Carment; Stewart Prest; Yiagadeesen Samy; Lewis, Alexandra; Siqueira, Isabel Rocha De; Balamoune Lutz; Robert, H.J. and G.R. Carl.

Migdal (1988, p. 270), enunciated some conditions or propositions of the theory as: (1). world historical timing that encourages concentrated social control; (2). military threat either from outside or within the country; (3). the basis for an independent bureaucracy; (4). skilful top leadership that would take advantage of all the above conditions in the state.

A fragile state is a country characterized by weak state capacity and/or weak state legitimacy leaving citizens vulnerable to a range of shocks. Some states are trapped in vicious cycle of violent conflict and poverty or suffer from a natural resource 'curse'; others face a legacy of poor governance; many emerging from crisis cannot deliver even the most basic services to their citizens. In terms of dynamics, fragile states have the character of: (i) Post-conflict/crisis or political transition situations, (ii) deteriorating governance environments, (iii) Situations of gradual improvement, and (iv) situations of prolonged crisis or impasse. A fragile state is significantly susceptible to crisis in one or more of its sub-systems. It is a state that is particularly vulnerable to internal and external shocks and domestic and international conflicts. In a fragile state, institutional arrangements embody and perhaps preserve the conditions of crisis (Robert & Carl, 1989).

Essentially, fragile states fail to fully meet key needs of their citizens. The shortcomings are termed gaps, with three core gaps: security gap, capacity gap, and legitimacy gap. The security gap means the state does not provide adequate protection to its citizens; the capacity gap means the state does not fully provide adequate services; and the legitimacy gap means that the authority of the state is not fully accepted. This differs from a failed state, whose governments totally lack legitimacy. Weak states may be difficult to define, as the states fail to collect thorough statistics on crime and education (Tyagi, 2012).

In terms of dynamics, fragile states include:

- * Conflict/post-conflict/crisis/war or political transition situations.
- * Deteriorating governance environments.
- * Situations of gradual improvement.
- * Situations of prolonged political or economic crisis or impasse.

A fragile state is significantly susceptible to crisis in one or more of its sub-systems. It is a state that is particularly vulnerable to internal and external shocks and domestic and international conflicts. Fragile states are not only evaluated by degree of fragility but also types of state fragility and threat they pose in to help policymakers to appropriate responses (Menkhaus, 2010).

In a fragile state, institutional arrangements embody and perhaps preserve the conditions of crisis: in economic terms, this could be institutions (importantly, property rights) that reinforce stagnation or low growth rates, or embody extreme inequality (in wealth, in access to property and land ownership, in access to the means to make a living); in social terms institutions may embody extreme inequality or lack of access altogether to health or education; in political terms, institutions may entrench exclusionary coalitions in power (in ethnic, religious, or perhaps regional terms), or extreme factionalism or significantly fragmented security organisations.

In fragile states, statutory institutional arrangements are vulnerable to challenges by rival institutional

systems be they derived from traditional authorities, devised by communities under conditions of stress that see little of the state (in terms of security, development or welfare), or be they derived from warlords, or other non-state power brokers. Fragile states might also offer citizens multiple, overlapping institutions from highly variant power sources that are competing for legitimacy. While, as opposed to a weak state, these different institutions might not be in direct conflict, they do offer strong competing narratives that hamper the progress of good governance.

Indicators of Fragile States

Table 1: Major Indicators inherent in Fragile States

Social	Political	Economic
Mounting demographic pressures and tribal, ethnic and/or religious conflicts.	Delegitimization of the state.	Widespread corruption
Massive internal and external displacement of refugees, creating severe humanitarian emergencies.	Deterioration of public services.	High economic inequality
Widespread vengeance seeking group grievances.	- Suspension or arbitrary application of law; widespread human rights abuses.	Uneven economic development along group lines.
Chronic and sustained human flight.	Security forces operating as a 'state within a state' often with impunity. Rise of factionalized elites. Intervention of external political agents and foreign states.	Severe economic decline.

Source: Fund for Peace (n.d), modified by the Author.

The above table shows the empirical indicators that are inherent in any fragile state. These indicators cut across the social, political and economic spheres of the state involved.

The Effects of Fragility in a State

Weak states have been hypothesized to contribute to terrorist activity. English philosopher Thomas Hobbes was the first to make the connection between the strength of a state and violence. He opined that a strong state with a monopoly on force was the only way to avoid a war of all against all. After the September 11 attacks, US President George W. Bush said that it “taught us that weak states, like Afghanistan, can pose as great a danger to our national interests as strong states. Poverty does not make poor people into terrorists and murderers. Yet poverty, weak institutions, and corruption can make weak states vulnerable to terrorist networks and drug cartels within their borders (Kleinfeld & Barham, 2018).

The link between weak states and terrorism has been disputed. In 2003, historian Walter Laqueur noted that a majority of poor, weak states had almost no terrorist activity. Weak states may also be more vulnerable to public health crises such as infectious disease, which can have spill over effects on other countries (Tyagi, 2012).

Application of the Theory to the Study

This theory is apt and applicable to this study because it tends to explain the reason why Nigeria as a fragile or weak state have been continually weakened from within and from without (i.e. internal and external factors) by incompetent leadership and dysfunctional institutions and bureaucracies. Thus, myriads of tractable, yet intractable development issues subsist due to the negligence of the Nigerian leadership. The theory points to the failure and/or fragility inherent in the Nigerian state's structure and the crises bedevilling virtually all aspects of the states especially in the socio-cultural, economic, religious, and political spheres of their existence leading to several separatist agitations with various groups threatening the corporate and social existence of the country. All these, are pointers or indicators to the fragility or weak capacity of the Nigerian state to manage all agitations and put at bay the current security threat in south-east, fomented by the unknown-gun-men (UGM), whose activities have left fear in the people of the region and the entire country.

The Discourse

Perspectives to the Identity and activities of UGM in Southeast

The million-dollar question is who are these “Unknown Gunmen” that have continued to unleash terror in southeast? In an attempt to answer this question, the Governor of Ebonyi state Dave Umahi averred on Channels Television's Sunrise Daily in Tunde (2021, p. 12), stated that:

...from what is happening in Ebonyi State, where the youth go to attack the Army, the Police, burnt down INEC offices when these people confront the security agencies, they kill the security agents; sometimes the security agents will kill. We profiled them and saw that they were not “Unknown Gunmen”. They are our brothers, mainly from the South-East, most of them from Ebonyi State. They are never outside the country.

From the foregoing, the governor was apparently quick to say that UGM are Indigenous Peoples of Biafra (IPOB) and Eastern Security Network (ESN), from the south-east, which many have refuted his claim as baseless and linking it to his selfish interest, ambition, and quest to acquire power at the centre by pacifying and soothing the northern oligarchs whose Fulani brothers have been fingered to be behind the onslaught in the region and other parts of the country. However, many of these criminals are known but perhaps due to political reasons or ineptitude on the part of our security personnel, or reasons that are not known, their crimes are often dismissed and simply labelled as 'Unknown Gunmen', denying their victims and families of the justice they deserve. The inability to apprehend these “Unknown Gunmen” has undoubtedly led to the surge in crime and criminality across the country.

There is a veneer of facelessness and anonymity about the perpetrators of this regime of blood-curdling heist in the southeast states. The governments have had to say and believe that notoriety of the Indigenous Peoples of Biafra (IPOB) over the years, and more recently the involvement of the nebulous Eastern Security Network (ESN), has had fingers of accusation being pointed in their direction, after each attack

(Njoku & Ogugbuaja, 2021). This is in spite of the routine denials of both groups, of complicity, after each criminal incident. Radicalised and by its leader, Nnamdi Kanu and his adherents, IPOB has, in recent weeks and months, functioned as an alternate, albeit self-styled leadership for the Southeast states. The group issues decrees and directives to the people of the zone and enforces same with cutting-edge brutality. IPOB has serially proclaimed “sit at home” orders on its “constituents” in Igbo land and proceeded to rein in disobedience and dissenting voices, with untold viciousness (Tunde, 2021).

In the run-up to the recent commemoration of Nigeria's 61st Independence Day anniversary, IPOB legislated against the hoisting of the national flag on public buildings, in the entire south east. Banks, educational institutions, security facilities and so on, were placed under the order. For added effect, a sit-at-home was also proclaimed for then October 1, 2021 event. The directive was largely obeyed, because major Igbo cities like Enugu, Owerri, Aba, Onitsha, Abakaliki, were virtual ghost towns on the day. A journalist who drove around incognito in Anambra, said he was amazed to travel the Awka to Onitsha road on Friday October 1, in 25 minutes, a journey of two hours on normal days (Tunde, 2021).

Accordingly, Njoku & Ogugbuaja (2021) surmised that the federal and the regional state governments have put the blame of the incessant attacks on ESN. It is also believed that the southeast governors in a bid to satisfy the presidency and paint themselves good because of their political ambitions, decided to flag-off and establish a parallel security outfit separate from ESN that is already doing similar job of community policing. Another school of thought claimed that cultists and terror groups have been procured by the federal government and specific political interests, to precipitate a state of unmanageable insecurity and pseudo-instability in the region, and also create fear and cause the postponement of the November 6, 2021 Anambra State election. This school of thought holds that high profile killings in the state, and the coordinated attacks on salient security formations, personalities, and properties are intended to make the federal government declare state of emergency in the state, and the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), to reschedule the election (Njoku & Ogugbuaja, 2021).

The Threat Dimensions of Unknown-Gun-Men in South-East, Nigeria

The security situation in southeast and Nigeria at large is indeed very dire at the moment, even when many undiscerning people try to downplay it. The Global Terrorism Index (GTI) covering events in 2019/2020 ranked Nigeria in 3rd place, describing the country as being one of those that could be classified as in a 'state of war'. In the Global Peace Index ranking of 2020, Nigeria ranked 147th out of 163 countries, compared to 148th position in the previous year (Tunde, 2021).

According to Njoku & Ogugbuaja (2021), at least, no fewer than 67 security agents, comprising the police, navy and prison wardens, have been killed by gunmen in the Southeast and South-South since December 2020 to April 2021. Also, about 25 police stations were also burnt in the renewed orgy of violence that followed the EndSARS protest across the nation in November 2020. Out of this figure, 62 were policemen, four Naval personnel, while the other person was a prison warden killed while taking some suspects to court in Awka, Anambra in March 2021.

The Southeast governors and heads of security agencies in the region in a communiqué issued after the first South-East security summit held in Owerri, Imo State capital on 12 April 2021 agreed to maintain the joint security outfit called Ebube Agu. The meeting also agreed on a ban on open grazing with the implementation to be carried out by security agencies. Surge in attacks continued after the birth of Ebube Agu. Many observers had believed that though Ebube Agu was hurriedly put together, it would provide

answers to the nagging security issues in the zone, especially those created by the unknown gunmen. However, since the Ebube Agu security outfit was birthed, the attacks on the zone have quadrupled to an alarming level. The unknown gunmen seem to have been emboldened by the creation of the security outfit (Tunde, 2021).

The spate of fear that has enveloped millions of Nigerians due to the protracted acts of these “Unknown Gunmen” is unprecedented. Interstate travelling by road has become a nail-biting experience with thanksgiving prayers and celebrations when travellers safely reach their destinations. While intra-state movements are filled with caution and anxiety with many looking above their shoulders. Even when under lock and key in our homes, the fear is palpable due to the menace of “Unknown Gunmen.”

Millions of Nigerians are currently internally displaced persons, students are being abducted from their schools and killed, farmers have been sent home not by the usual culprit – natural disasters, but by “Unknown Gunmen.” Policemen and women are being brutally murdered in the South-East, businesses are being destroyed and Foreign Direct investors are scared of coming into the country to invest and those already here have begun relocating.

Despite what anyone says, the bitter truth is that crime, criminality, violence and socio-political disorder now permeate the length and breadth of the region. Whether you label them as bandits, hoodlums, insurgents, kidnappers, unknown gunmen or what have you, the reality is that these ruthless and dastard criminals have plunged the region into a tidal wave of crime and something needs to be done urgently or else the waves might just consume us all.

Two developments which took place simultaneously in Enugu, capital of Enugu State and political headquarters of the South East, Tuesday October 4, 2021, underscored a novel resolve to stem the raging insanity and heedless bloodletting which have become recurring decimals in Igbo land, over the last few weeks and months. First, the Nigerian Army launched a new military operation in the Southeast, codenamed “Exercise New Dawn.” The operation, according to the Chief of Army Staff Lt. General Faruk Yahaya, will curb rising cases of insecurity in the zone. It hopes to tackle insurgency, kidnapping and rising banditry in the South East, and check wanton killings and incineration of public facilities in the zone (Njoku & Ogugbuaja, 2021). However, since after the flag-off of 'Exercise New Dawn' in southeast by the Nigerian Army, the activities of the UGM have continued unabated and the seat-at-home order persists even after several efforts by the government to get the citizens out on the streets every Mondays and other days declared by IPOB as sit-at-home.

Conclusion and Recommendations

It is evident that the activities of the UGM are well coordinated and deeper than what we can see. The Nigerian authorities have fingered and accused ESN as UGM; while the apologists of the ESN have averred that the UGM are sponsored criminals of the federal government sent to wreak havoc in the region as a way of suppressing IPOB's secessionist agitation. By and large, the Nigerian state needs to call a convocation of leaders from all ethnic nationality to discuss some contentious issues on national unity and security. If the people of Southeast understand that Nigeria is ready to listen to their issues, likewise the North and South-west, they would go home and try and hold their people together even if they are miscreants.

Conversely, if the only way to solve security problems is by trading blames, buying more arms and employing more policemen, then we are not yet ready. The more security personnel you recruit the more

problem you have, especially in a fragile state where security personnel are recruited lopsidedly in the interests of the power that be. To buttress this stance, Nigeria has changed the Inspector General of Police (IGP); states' commissioners of police have been changed and/or redeployed, Service Chiefs have been changed; more equipment for the military and para-military have been bought, yet we are still nowhere near to solving the security problem in Nigeria.

Intelligence gathering and helpful information is vital in every security apparatus. However, our security architecture faces a serious lack of trust from the populace. Many of these criminals live amongst us and in many cases we know them but are scared to alert the authorities for lack of trust on the side of government/authorities. Inefficient investigations are carried out and such criminals are often let off the hook. Albeit, the fragility inherent in the Nigerian state, her institutions and her security architectures have heightened the security threat in the region by making it seem insurmountable. Alas! The Nigeria state needs to learn security lessons from the menace of 'Unknown Gunmen.'

The study recommends that:

1. It is very vital that the Nigerian state call for a referendum of all the regions to ascertain their intentions to remain as one country. If that is done, then the following suggestions will be germane and should be appropriated in the region and Nigeria at large.
2. The federal government and states in the region need to begin to fashion enduring solutions not the knee-jerk/reactionary approach that have been applied.
3. Security operatives must scale up intelligence to tackle the trend, as it is worrisome that no arrests had been made on the attacks that had lasted for over a year now in the region.
4. With a stretched-thin workforce and overarching insecurity, technology can be employed via gadgets and cameras mounted in public areas and a committed surveillance team set up for monitoring of activities and identification of criminals.
5. A reliable database will also go a long way towards understanding crimes and their patterns as well as aiding in mapping out operational strategies to tackle insecurity.
6. Similarly, telecommunication can be used to track these 'Unknown-Gunmen' and other criminals perpetrating violence in the region and in Nigeria at large. These criminals often get across to their victims' families to demand for ransom in the case of kidnapping, they always use mobile phones and other traceable devices for this purpose. And these gadgets can be tracked with the right technology.
7. It is extremely vital that our security sector improve coordination amongst its security personnel, win the confidence of everyday people and use every means possible to protect lives and property of all citizens as well as the integrity of the country. No excuse should be given nor should be accepted from them.

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