Internal Security Operations and Human Rights Abuses in Nigeria: Issues and Challenges.

Article · January 2014

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Idowu Johnson
University of Ibadan
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Contents

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Contents

Internal Security Operations and Human Rights Abuses in Nigeria: Issues and Challenges.

Idowu Johnson

Department of Political Science, University of Ibadan, Ibadan , Nigeria

The most outstanding challenge to the Nigerian state since the beginning of the twenty-first century is probably the proliferation of internal conflicts. This is primarily because they impede the growth of democracy and threaten national security. In order to maintain peace and security, the military is given a constitutional role in managing internal conflicts through internal security operations when the police is overwhelmed. However, the military at times misuse the constitutional powers by violating the rights of the civilian population. This paper examines the connection between internal security operations and human rights abuses in Nigeria. The major direction is to provide a deeper understanding of the constitutional role of the military in the management of internal conflicts, while also looking at the challenges and the prospects for non-violation of human rights of civilian population. The paper concludes with some recommendations on how the military can be involved in internal security operations without violating citizens' human rights.

Keywords: Internal Conflict, Internal Security Operations, Military, Human right abuses.

Introduction

Internal security operation involving the military is a global phenomenon. In spite of the efforts of the United Nations to maintain international peace and security, international crisis remains frightening and unpredictable. Experience from developed countries, Middle East and emerging democracies shows that stiff competition over issues of legitimacy, autonomy and sovereignty can threaten internal security of a nation. At the regional level, porous borders, insurgent's movement, poverty and underdevelopment have been creating high degree of insecurity. For Nigeria, violent conflict, whether social, political, religious or environmental issues have contributed significantly to internal security crisis (Ogundiya and Jimoh, 2009; Ekekpe, 2007; Dare, 1997).

A cursory examination of the topic evidently indicates that there is probably no better time than now to dwell on the security challenges facing Nigeria, given the worrisome dimensions of the security problems. The rising spate of aggression against the Nigerian state in the recent times testifies to this. Although this has been the case ever since Nigeria was formed and it also continued throughout the colonial period, the recent occurrence of terrorism in the country has further justified the need for enhanced internal security operations.

The importance attached to security is well captured in the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Section 14 (2) (b) of the constitution state that "the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government". Invariably, the Constitution has saddles the Government with the responsibility of safeguarding lives, property, welfare of Nigerians against both internal and external threats including other forms of danger. Thus it is incumbent on the Government to monitor public order and safety, including law and order (FGN 1999 Constitution).

In order to tackle security challenges, nations establish the armed forces, police, security agencies and other Para-military forces. The Nigerian armed forces and police personnel have, from available records, maintained a track record of effective peace-keeping campaigns around the globe. This record of success has earned for the nation, a number of international recognitions and commendations. The officers concerned have equally won honours and got decorated with medals of honour. The government and people of Sierra Leone and Liberia in particular, at regular intervals, express gratitude to the government and people of Nigeria. This is with regard to the noble roles played by Nigerian armed forces in restoring peace and sanity to those countries (Robert, 2012: 410).

With such high profile rating in the way they conduct themselves when on international peace-keeping operations, it was expected that the Nigerian armed forces would display the same record while on national (internal) peace-keeping operations. A number of factors however, tend to expose some problems inherent in the way they have handled internal crisis flash-points, to which they have been drafted to maintain peace. A number of analysts of these internal operations have pointed to the problem of high handedness and insensitivity to the nature and characteristics of civilian dominated areas, howbeit, with an admixture of rebel elements. There have been severe cases of human rights abuses. The dust usually left behind crisis scenes in Nigeria by military personnel (drafted to such areas) leaves much to be desired, hence, the need for an analysis of this nature. Examples of places where military forces have left behind woes of gross human rights violations are Odi, Zaki Biam and the recent Baga incident in Borno State, Nigeria. The paper therefore focuses on the relationship between internal security operations and human right abuses in Nigeria.

Conceptual Clarification

In order to understand the problematic in this paper an attempt will be made to clarify and operationalize some key concepts. These are namely, security; internal security operations; and human rights.

Security

Security is an encompassing phenomenon that is paramount to individuals, entities, communities and even nations. Security has to do with self-preservation which is the first law of existence. Security implies a stable, relatively predictable environment in which an individual or group may pursue its ends or objectives without disruption, harm, danger and without fear of disturbance or injury. One school of thought identifies security with the possession of strong armed forces, built on high concentration of manpower and weapons. This is a realist conception of security. Another school of thought is based on the neo-realist paradigm that maintains a continued emphasis on the primacy of the state within a broadened conceptualization of security (Pogoson, 2013).

In the Nigerian Grand Strategy for National Security, security was defined as:

> the aggregation of the security interest of all individuals, communities, ethnic groups, political entities and institutions which inhabit the territory of Nigeria. The Grand Strategy specifically states that paramount

importance is attached to safety, security and the prosperity of individuals and institutions within Nigeria and what belongs to Nigeria and Nigerians abroad (Dasuki, 2013).

Generally, security is taken to mean freedom from risk or danger or fear; safety; confidence and the ability of a nation to protect and defend itself; promote its cherished values and legitimate interest and enhance the well-being of its people. Horizontally, security went beyond the military to encompass economic, political, environmental, social and other aspects. Vertically, security went beyond the state, to incorporate and emphasize the individual, social groups (ethnic, religious, professional), the state and humanity at large (Nwolise, 2012: 14). In the same vein, the concept of security has been linked to human security. Human security seeks to protect the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance human freedom and human fulfilment (UN Commission on Human Security, 2003: 4). The concept of human security derives strength from four attributes as noted by Oche (2002: 38):

i. It is based on universal concerns, as a result of the numerous forms of threats common to all people.

ii. Components of human security are interdependent, as threats to it are no longer isolated matters.

iii. Threats to human security are much easier to secure and cope with through early preventive measures.

iv. Human security is centred on people and their existence.

Consequently, the search for human security lies in development, not in arms. From this, the human security approach holds that if the individual is secured, then security will emanate to the community, regime, and finally the state. The national and human security paradigms are opposite understandings on how human communities are best protected (Mcfate, 2013). Thus internal security could seen as the freedom from or absence of those tendencies which could undermine internal cohesion and the corporate existence of the nation and its ability to maintain its vital institutions for the promotion of its core values and socio-political and economic objectives, as well as meet the legitimate aspiration of the people.

Internal security operations

Internal Security Operations (ISOPs) are those acts carried out by the domestic security agents such as the Police, Customs Service, Immigration Service, and others, for the purpose of containing domestic threats to the security of the country. These threats often relate to dire cases of riots, demonstrations, strikes, communal clashes, terrorism, and the likes, which normally fall outside the constitutional duty of the military (Okoli, 2013). For instance, it is the duty of the Police to maintain law and order within the society. Section 4 of the Police Act provides the general duties of the police as the preservation of law and order, the protection of life and property and the due enforcement of all laws and regulations with which they are directly charged. ISOPs are designed to handle internal conflicts in a country. ISOPs focuses on promoting peace and supporting civil authorities in reaction to domestic crisis. It may involve elements of both combat and non-combat operations in peacetime and in conflict. Such support to civil authority requires use of military and intelligence (Akanle, 2007). In Nigeria, communal/ethnic clashes, religious conflicts and; recently, acts of terrorism have however, necessitated the involvement of the military in ISOPs.

Human rights

According to the Oxford Dictionary of politics, human rights are a special sort of inalienable moral entitlements. They attach to all persons equally, by virtue of their humanity, irrespective of race, nationality, or membership of any social group. They specify condition for human dignity and a tolerable life (Maclean and Macmillan, 2003). The entire development from natural rights to human freedoms is epitomized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) of 1948.

Domestic laws usually apply in internal security operations, but this is however influenced by the rules and standards of international law. Domestic laws provide the basis for military involvement in internal security operations while international human rights law regulates the conducts of operations, military or otherwise in those situations. International laws do not contain provisions for when the military can perform internal security operations but they provide regulations for the conduct of 'actors' during such periods. International human rights law applies both during armed conflicts and in peacetime. This also applies to both armed conflicts of international and domestic nature. Its aim is to protect the rights of individuals against State authorities. Those rights are set forth in international treaties such as the ICCPR, and in regional conventions such as the African Charter of Human and Peoples Rights (Epiphany, 2013).

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework adopted for this paper is derived from a combination of "state failure", "state collapse" and "state fragility". The essence o f this eclectic theoretical framework is to pinpoint the general ineffectiveness of public policies and government regulations, among which Internal Security Operations (ISOs) could be located. The state in Africa, or African state for those who argue that countries in sub-Saharan Africa constitute a generic species, has continuously occupied the lowest rungs of performance

classifications and rankings of state types on account of its failure to act as an effective agent of development and guarantee human security in all ramifications (Osaghae, 2010 : 85). State failure is believed to have evolved from a regional phenomenon to one reaching almost global proportions (Rotberg 2002, Reno, 2002). In the same vein, state failure generally connects institutional breakdown to a break down of society, which are consequently seen as two sides of the same vein. The reason, according to Zartman (1995), is that in a "weak" society, there exists a general inability to refill the institutional gaps left by withering government structures: the organization and allocation of political assets thus easily fall into the hands of "warlords and gang leaders", who often make use of "ethnic elements " as a source of identity and control in the absence of an overriding social contracts that binds citizens to the state (Zartman 1995:7). In fact, as Dorff (1996) has argued, in relatively "weak" states democratic institution and processes can easily fall prey to the forces of uncertainty and fear, especially when there are indigenous actors ready willing, and able to exploit human emotions for the sake of redirecting or killing democratic reforms.

However, Migdal (2001) views state "collapse" not so much as an end state or breakdown, but rather as a culmination point in the continuous struggle between various forces in society, to control the three core functions that are generally connected to state performance, namely: provision of security, the ability to allocate economic resources and the representation of a national population inhabiting a fixed territory. It has to be emphasized that the absence of a common set of norms or interests does not mean that there are no rules governing society as observed by Raeymaekers (2005). He further agued that what emerges in situations of state "collapse" in sub-Sahara Africa, in many cases could be described as a continuation of neopatrimonialism without the state (Raeymaekers, 2005: 6).

Similarly, sectoral weaknesses cumulate to state fragility where the state is defined in its most imperial sense as the political sovereign or final authority within its territory. Osaghae (2010) observed that political instability, economic failure, social dislocation, institutional and political weaknesses and failures, are all integral elements of state fragility which, by definition, gives primacy to the political correlate of statehood. Thus, a "fragile" state basically lacks the capacity to function as an effective or capable state. It is obvious that while most states may have one element of fragility or the other, those on Africa and other parts of Third World are the most fragile, to the extent that they present the full face of the worst indicators of fragility in terms of both capacity and performance (Osaghae, 2010 : 93).

More importantly, state failure, state collapse and state fragility are essentially placed on a development continuum, where one stage of failure almost automatically leads to another. While the difference between these stages is primarily one of degree, the common feature of these authors is that they trace both state fragility to a common origin, namely "an overall breakdown of the corpus of formal and informal rules governing society, accompanied by the disappearance of formal authority or its emaciation" (Raeymaekers, 2005 : 3).

Quite obviously, to achieve a maximum stability a regime must both carry out the tasks expected of a competent government, and maintain legitimacy by being perceived as just and fair in the manner it carries out those tasks. A state may remain in a condition of fragile instability if it lacks effectiveness or legitimacy in a number of dimensions. However, a state is likely to fail or to already be a failed state, if it has lost both.

The usefulness of state failure, state collapse and state fragility as theoretical framework in this paper is that they are unique on real-time monitoring of security and political conditions in Nigeria.

An Overview of Internal Security Crises in Nigeria

Nigeria has had a chequered history of internal crises. Even, in the relatively recent times, there are still clear indications of internal crisis and often, the military have been drafted to maintain peace and stability. The military has always been involved in internal security from the days of colonialism. In August 1914, as the First World War gathered pace, an Egba revolt was militarily crushed by ten companies of troops from the newly created "Nigeria Regiment" (Omoigui, 2013). In 1929/1930, the regiment was called upon for a major internal security operation against Igbo women, mainly at Aba (Omoigui, 2013). The Nigerian Air Force similarly participated in Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW) against Maitatsine elements in Kano and Maiduguri, against the Taliban in the Mandara Mountains and in Panshekara and are active with the Special Task Force – Operation Safe Haven on the Jos Plateau while the Nigerian Navy were deeply involved in the management of the Ijaw – Itsekiri crises in the Warri metropolitan area.

Both services, where they maintain a presence, have over the course of several decades actively cooperated with the Nigerian Army in Internal Security Operations (ISOs) geared towards restoring peace to various parts of the volatile federation. These include, but are not limited to, the Tiv and Western Nigeria crises of 1962-1965, the post-election violence of 1983 in Western Nigeria, Ife-Modakeke conflict of the late 1990s, the 2000 Sharia crisis in Kaduna which claimed thousands of lives. (Abdu, 2010; Irabor, 2010; Egwu, 2001). The Nigerian Army also had to intervene in Yelwa-Shendam, Jos and Kano in 2004 to restore peace after well over a thousand persons had been killed in ethno-religious violence between Hausa Muslims and indigenous Christian peoples in the central highlands and reprisal killings which followed in Hausa Muslim-dominated Kano thereafter. So serious was

the violence that a rare state of emergency was declared in Plateau State.

Some years later, serious ethno-religious violence broke out and reprisal killings followed thereafter and across broad swathes of Northern and Eastern Nigeria in that order, occasioned by perceived indiscretion on the part of a Danish cartoonist who allegedly defamed aspects of the Islamic religion in 2006. In 2011, post-election violence broke out in some disaffected segments of Northern Nigeria leading to the deaths of over 800 people with thousands that were internally displaced. It took the intervention of the Nigerian Army to restore normalcy to the restive parts of the federation (Okoli, 2013). The security challenges witnessed in the country so far have proven, as a result of their magnitude, that the Police alone cannot tackle them. This fact thereby called for more of military intervention in form of ISOPs and it has been observed that the military is increasingly involved in Internal Security Operations.

The Military and Internal Security Operations in Nigeria

The 1999 Constitution of Nigeria which provides for the military in its section 217 makes it clear that the duties of the military, that is the Army, Navy and Air force will be to defend Nigeria from external aggression, maintain its territorial integrity and securing its borders from isolation on land, sea or air, suppressing insurrection and acting in aid of civil authorities to restore order when called upon to do so by the President but subject to such conditions as may be prescribed by an Act of National Assembly. The military is also to perform such other functions as may be prescribed by an Act of the National Assembly. Although the main functions of the military is to protect the nation against external aggression or threats, occasionally the military may be required to assist the civil authorities to deal with internal violence and suppress internal tension. For instance, the military may be required to assist the police in restoring law and order in any part of the

country. The present condition in the North-East justifies the foregoing. Section 217(c) 1999 Constitution therefore, forms the basis of the involvement of the military in Internal Security Operations (ISOPs) in Nigeria.

In connection with the foregoing, it is noteworthy that domestic laws usually apply in internal security operations, but this is however influenced by the rules of engagement and standards of international law. Domestic laws provide the basis for military involvement in internal security operations while international human rights law regulates the conducts of operations, military or otherwise in those situations. International laws do not contain provisions for when the military can perform internal security operations but they provide regulations for the conduct of 'actors' during such periods. International human rights law applies both during armed conflicts and in peacetime. This also applies to both armed conflicts of international and domestic nature. Its aim is to protect the rights of individuals against State authorities. Those rights are set forth in international treaties such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Right(ICCPR), and in regional conventions such as the African Charter of Human and Peoples Rights. The rights listed in these international treaties apply at all times except under some special conditions whereby a state may derogate from them by notifying the relevant authorities of its derogation. These special conditions include in the event of a public emergency threatening the existence of the nation. More importantly, just as the 1999 Constitution lend credence to military intervention in internal security operations, it also safeguards human rights by providing for the rights to life, right to personal liberty, right to privacy, and right to human dignity (FGN Constitution, 1999).

However, it is pertinent to state that the security forces of the Nigerian state have many times, flagrantly violated human rights in the course of internal security operations. These have been done many times with impunity and the Nigerian state on its part, has

been unresponsive to these cases of abuse which of course; threatens the cordial existence of the state. Owing to this therefore, it calls for a re-examination of basic issues and challenges in internal security operations and how these issues could be addressed to augment human rights issues in Nigeria.

Internal Security Operations and Human Rights Abuses in Nigeria: An Examination of Issues of Relevance

The Nigerian military has engaged in peace keeping operations in over 50 countries and has been commended for its noble conduct during those occasions. Specifically, its role in Liberia and Sierra Leone among others in the West African sub-region is worthy of note. Thus, it is curious that the same level of professionalism, as reported outside the country, often does not manifest during internal security operations. The problem of high handedness and insensitivity to the nature and characteristics of civilian dominated areas is always pointed out as a flaw (Robert, 2012). A number of critical issues are associated with the Nigerian military when engaged in internal security operations; most of which are negative owing to the blatant disregard for human dignity. These issues are discussed below:

Excessive use of force

The use of excessive force is against the precepts of human rights. Excessive force is a force generally beyond that which a reasonable and prudent law enforcement officer would use under the circumstances. Article 51(5)(b) of the 1977 Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions prohibits attack which may be expected to cause incidental loss of civilian life, injury to civilians, damage to civilian objects, or a combination thereof, which would be excessive in relation to the concrete and direct military advantage anticipated. The military engaged in internal operations has been reported on several occasions as using excessive force. The case popularly known as the Odi Massacre provides an illustration of this. An attack

carried out on November 20, 1999 by the Nigerian military on the predominantly Ijaw village of Odi in Bayelsa State. The attack came in the context of the conflict in the Niger Delta over the indigenous rights to oil resources and environmental protection. Prior to the Massacre, twelve (12) members of the Nigerian police were murdered by a gang of restive youths near the village of Odi. In an apparent revenge, the military acting on the directive of the Federal government, invaded the village and raided it. This attack was characterized by intense and excessive use of force. In effect scores of unarmed civilians, including women and children, were killed. All the buildings in the village, except the bank, the Anglican Church and the Community Health Centre, were destroyed, leaving the village in a woeful state of desolation (Okoli, 2013:23).

Closely following the Odi invasion by the Nigerian Army was the invasion of Zaki Biam, a Tiv community in Benue State. This invasion took place in 2001 as a result of which no fewer than 100 people were massacred by the army in revenge for the killing of 19 soldiers sent to restore peace following an ethnic violence. So clear was the injustice done to the people in the community that then Chief of Army Staff, Lt. Gen. Luka Yusuf, tendered an apology on behalf of the Nigerian Army to the people of ZakiBiam during the Chief of Army Staff Annual Conference held in Makurdi in 2007 (The Punch Newspaper, November 7, 2007). The missing gap in all these military operations was that excessive force that clearly violates laws of armed conflict and the import thereof, is that they create new problems in the polity. The results are the contrasting realities we witness in Nigeria today (Albert, 2012).

Displacement of People

When military personnel go beyond their brief using excessive force, or perpetrating atrocities on innocent people, most people in affected areas are forced to evacuate. It is an unfortunate situation that security personnel deployed to a part of Nigeria to provide

security and maintain peace, turn out to become security threats to innocent citizens, forcing them to become displaced persons (Nwolise, 2007). It creates bitterness and agony in the minds of the people as witnessed in Ogoni, Odi, Zaki Biam, Jos and others.

Extra judicial killings

Military internal security operations have also been characterized by extra judicial killings. The Borno State Governor, Kashim Shettima, said in April 2013 that over 100 people were killed in Baga during the April 16 clash between officers of the Joint Task Force and insurgents in Baga community, Borno State. Residents of the village said they buried 185 people after the battle, while the Red Cross has said 187 people were killed (Audu, 2013). The human Rights Watch also reported the military operation at Gbeji (in ZakiBiam area of Benue State) in what turned out to be a "played" meeting. The soldiers made the villagers to sit on the ground, separating thereby men from the rest and opening fire on the men indiscriminately (Human Right Watch, 2001). There have also been several reports on extra judicial killings by the military in Nigeria. One of such killings is the September 20 killing of innocent poor squatters in an uncompleted building in Abuja who were suspected to be Boko Haram members. Sahara Reporter can however, authoritatively confirm that the eight persons shot and killed by Nigerian security agents were in no way linked to the dreaded Boko Haram sect as claimed by the spokesperson of the State Security Department, Marilyn Ogar (www.saharareporters.com). This is one assault on the part of the Nigerian security agents, too many.

Degrading treatment of citizens- rape, torture

Under normal circumstances, soldiers are not supposed to be seen all over the place but there is a departure from this in situations where military perform internal security operations as they are deployed to affected areas. Soldiers reportedly extort citizens after intimidating them. It is now a norm for soldiers to ask defaulting car drivers on the high way to do 'frog jumps' as a form of punishment. Women and girls are raped on a number of occasions whether or not during a conflict. Some girls were reportedly raped in Abuja by soldiers under the guise that the girls were prostitutes (www.eknnigeria.com). These are clear instances of derogation of human dignity.

Arbitrary arrest

Soldiers involved in internal security operations also effect arrest arbitrarily. For instance, at Odi and ZakiBiam, many young people were arrested and falsely accused of being masterminds of the killing of security personnel. At Onitsha, a number of youths were arrested and falsely accused of being members of MASSOB. Many were even detained without trials. This does not augur well for Nigeria's reputation in human rights management.

The foregoing issues, as discussed above, have therefore brought to the front burner of the national discourse, once again, the need to enshrine the doctrine of proportionality in the use of force via re-orientation of the military and para-military forces in Nigeria. Also, more fundamental is the need to realise that rules of engagement for the military in internal security operation must be sanctioned by the act of parliament with acute punishment in cases of violation and strict adherence in terms of diligent enforcement of punishment on the part of the armed forces and the Nigerian state. This will make it to be more than just a guideline. The encounter involving personnel of the Nigerian Armed Forces on internal security duties and the Baga community on or around 16 April 2013 illustrates serious concerns about proportionality of the use of force as well as with humanitarian and human rights compliance in internal security operations that must be addressed by the Federal Government, security forces and institutions of accountability in the search for durable solutions to the on-going problems

in the Nigerian federation in general, and the North-East of Nigeria in particular.

Challenges of the Military in Internal Security Operations in Nigeria

The involvement of the military in civil operations informs the need for the military to adjust to the demands of internal security operations. The military usually encounter problems adjusting when dealing with civil operations. Some areas where these problems stem from have been highlighted as follows:

Training

Since the primary function of the military is to defend the country in times of war, military training is usually based on inflicting maximum damage and destruction on their opponents and defeating them in the shortest possible time within the rules and the law of armed conflict. Meanwhile, internal security operations only require restraint and the use of minimum force which is in contrast to what is usually required of soldiers in conventional warfare. The requirement for minimum force is because they are now maintaining law and order among their own people in their own country.

The arbitrariness associated with the military while in internal security operations can be attributed to the kind of training undergone by the soldiers. There is therefore the need for the military to undergo proper training to deal with internal operations. This fact was also acknowledged by Chief of Army Staff, Lt. Gen. OnyeaboIhejirika, who said that the Nigerian Army must refocus its logistics training to cater for internal security operations in aid of civil authority (Utebor, 2013).

Orientation

This is the attitude or views of a person. Military orientation dictates that a potential threat is an enemy and as such should be eradicated. Having a mindset like this during internal operations is dangerous. Defence against external aggression should be differentiated from the defence employed against 'enemies' within.

Another issue is the perceived attitude of the military when called upon to perform internal security operations. Some soldiers are of the opinion that they have a more noble role than this and some even think they have been called upon because of the incapability and inefficiency of the police in maintaining law and order. The resultant effect is that the military usually take over operations from the police instead of aiding the civil authorities as provided for in section 217 of the 1999 Constitution. Instead of lending support to the police or other civil authorities concerned the military end up taking leading roles. This can give rise to jealousy and distrust between the police force involved in the operations and the soldiers deployed for the internal operations. This is capable of causing unhealthy rivalry which can eventually undermine security efforts. This has caused the Nigerian Army to advocate for a centralized system to co-ordinate the activities of Joint Task Force Operations in the country as such system would prevent order and counter order by various Heads of Security Agencies (www.radionigeriaibadan.com).

Equipment

Often times the soldiers involved in internal security operations are not properly equipped for the task. Soldiers engaged in internal operations who are only equipped with guns will definitely use it if their lives are threatened by a hostile mob. An average mob in Nigeria can only be in possession of stones and not guns. Using deadly equipment such as guns in this situation will not be suitable.

Strategy and tactics

Military strategy and tactics are essential to the conduct of warfare. Strategy is the planning, coordination, and general direction of military operations to meet overall political and military objectives. Tactics implement strategy by short-term decisions on the movement of troops and employment of weapons on the field of battle. Armies all over the world have strategies and tactics employed in times of war. Some of the most

commonly cited principles are the objective, the offensive, surprise, security, unity of command, economy of force, mass, and manoeuvre. There is also the Envelopment tactic which is the unexpected appearance of enemy troops on a flank or from behind which can damage an army's morale, and if a force is encircled it can be deprived of supplies or attacked from any side (Rob, 2010).

We will agree that internal conflicts do not always require all these tactics which soldiers ordinarily employ. Dealing with a hostile crowd of civilians in a riot situation requires a completely different approach from an attack on an enemy position in conventional warfare. There is the need to adjust to the smaller scale of operations and the tactical mobility required.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The military will continually be involved in internal security operations notwithstanding the negative practices associated with their involvement. The Constitution serves as the main domestic law safeguarding the rights of the citizens thereby indirectly regulating the conduct of the military during operations. There are also international conventions and treaties, many of which Nigeria is a signatory to. To be sure, there is no domestic legislation which specifically regulates military interventions in internal security operations. The Rules of Engagement of the military only serves as guidelines to the military and do not have any force of law per se. This contributes to the lack of respect for human rights exhibited by the military during some internal operations. It is necessary therefore to regulate their operations during these periods through a domestic legislation specifically enacted for that purpose.

The increasing roles taken by the military in internal security operations have been criticized by people who are of the opinion that the military is not trained to manage internal operations like other civil authorities such as the police. However, it must be said that the involvement of the military in internal operations has had its advantages notwithstanding the negativity associated with it. The military will also go a long way in providing aid to civil authorities if the proper mechanisms necessary for civil protection and internal operations are put in place. It is recommended that a domestic legislation which will regulate the operations of the military during internal security operations should be put in place. The Rules of Engagement of the military should be given a legal status and stopped from operating as mere guidelines. In addition, there should be operational training for soldiers who will be involved in internal security operations. Training in riot control drill is of the utmost importance. Soldiers should also be knowledgeable in conflict management. Thus, there should be a re-orientation of the soldiers involved in internal operations and the populace as well. The military has been tagged with the label of terror and an average Nigerian encountering soldiers on the road is likely to be subjected to unnecessary and unwarranted fear. The fact that soldiers do not mingle with the day to day life of the people unlike the police is responsible for the fear. Finally, defence and security personnel should learn humane handling of citizens; and both governments and security agents must not trample on the rights of the people.

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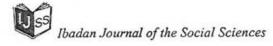
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Biographical Note

Idowu Johnson (Ph.D) teaches Political Science at the University of Ibadan. His research interests are in the area of International Relations, Strategic and Development Studies.