

Police Reforms and the Challenges of Professionalism in Nigeria, 1966-2008

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Abstract

The police force established by the British authorities was designed for the subjugation of the people as authorities exploited the country's both human and natural resources at the expense of the development of their country. However, by 1960, Nigeria began to address the defect inherited from colonial administrators by setting up the Gobir Panel to entrench police professionalism and eliminate mediocrity, corruption and partisan political approach of the regional police. It is observed that even after independence, the country's police force however became a victim of military rule as the military neglected its funding, strengthening and re-positioning. The study utilizes both primary and secondary sources of data. Using the historical and content analysis method, the study discovered that, the 2002 Presidential Committee on police reforms, the Muhammad Danmadami Presidential Committee on Police Reform of 2006 and the M.D. Yusufu Presidential Committee of 2008, were possible reform regimes and attempts made by the civilian government from 1999, to restore professionalism in the Nigeria Police Force and gain public trust. Findings also show that between 1966 and 2008, there was little significant change in the conduct and attitudes of the Nigeria Police Force, given the several reforms initiated by the Federal government. It concludes that none of these reforms did acknowledge the realities of torture and deaths in custody, nor take cognizance of human rights protection which is the fulcrum of professionalism.

Keywords: Professionalism, Police Reforms, Human Rights, Police Act.

Introduction

Law enforcement agencies, within the context of professionalism and democratic principles,

have a discrete function to play in fighting crime, especially in respect to rule of law and high regard for human rights and dignity.¹ These principles are sacrosanct and must be cherished by law enforcement institutions. With this task, the police are the most noticeable security organization all over the world in the fighting crime. In Nigeria, the police is the main government institutions burdened with the responsibility of ensuring both internal and sometime external security of the country which includes protection of lives and properties of citizens and foreigners residing in the country.² Thus, the main function of the police in Nigeria is to ensure the protection of lives and property of everyone and maintaining public safety, law and order. It also includes preventing and detecting crimes as well as protecting the rights and freedom of people in the country. The facilitation of free passage and movement on the highways, roads and street, among other are included in to list.³ To achieve these, attributes of professionalism, the police must uphold the tenets of specialized knowledge, competency, behaviour/attitude (honesty and integrity), respect, accountability, self-regulation, politeness, physical appearance.⁴

¹S. Abdul and J. Ahmad, M. N. Khalil, I. Asmara, I. Sobia, I. O. Muhammad, and I. Muhammad, Professionalism is the Key to Create Public Value. *International Journal of Engineering & Technology*, Volume 7, No. 30 (2018), pp. 583 – 586.

²*ibid.*

³Nigerian Police Act, FRN, 2020.

⁴Okemuyiwa Akeem Adedeji, "State Police in Nigeria: Issues and Challenges." *SSRN Electronic Journal*, Volume 5 (2012). Available at: https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2088033.

W. Daniel is defined professionalism as that acts which mark a profession or a professional person in his/her field.⁵ In his view, professionalism is putting one's profession first, above other conducts and putting an acceptable and quality standard of training, skill, morals and conduct into a profession.⁶ By implication professionalism is the process of conducting oneself towards achieving organizational goals. Professionalism cannot evolve if an institution does not make attempts to improve upon its mode of operations, which constitutes the essence of reforms.

Nigeria among developing countries of the world has experienced a high occurrence of criminal tendencies and crime waves and varying measure of delinquent activities. Regrettably, Nigeria has been on the global crime map since 1980s⁷ as the country grappled with an upsurge in criminal activities. The intricate nature of criminal activities became apprehensive leading to fear and agitation in the public space,⁸ questioning the professional outlook of the police in discharging its duties.

With the public outcry, government began to make efforts to give the Nigeria Police Force a new outlook in terms of professionalism and restore public trust which it had lost, from the days of colonialism, down to its post-colonial vestiges. However, the capacity of the police to battle crime is a function of many factors

including the application of professionalism in their approach through the police reforms, which ranges from requirements such as the skill acquired, educational qualification, the technical knowhow needed by the police for the technical performance of their constitutional duties.⁹

Evolution of Nigeria Police Force

The Nigeria Police had its origins in Lagos following the creation of a 30-man Consular Guard in 1861, which was subsequently expanded to 600 men in 1891 and later renamed "Hausa Police." The renaming was done because of the enlistment of some captured run-away Hausa slaves at Jebba by Lt. Glover R. N.¹⁰ A major reorganization was made in 1879 when the Hausa Police was enlarged by the recruitment of more men, leading to the renaming from "Hausa Police" to "Hausa Constabulary," which consisted of 1,200 officers and men. The Hausa Constabulary was tasked with attending to the security needs of colonial administration which included both civil police and military service. However, there indication which proved that Hausa Constabulary was largely military in its posture and outlook; in that, one of such duties was the provision of a detachable of 8 officers and 51 men used during the Arochukwu expedition.¹¹

The Lagos police force which operated mainly in the Lagos area, was established on January 1, 1896, which resembled the Hausa Constabulary in nature and outlook. According to the Nigeria Police Force, "the force was armed and consisted of

⁵W. P. Daniel, "What is Professionalism? What does Professionalism mean to you?" Volume 15 (2015). Available at: <https://what-is-professionalism.pdf>. Retrieved September 25, 2021.

⁶M. Davis, "Professionalism means putting your profession first." *The George Town Journal of Legal Ethics*, Volume 11, No. 1 (1988), pp. 341 – 357.

⁷John Campbell, "Nigeria Security Tracker." *Council on Foreign Relations*, August 1, 2020. Available at: <https://www.cfr.org/nigeria/nigeria-security-tracker/> p, 29-48.

⁸N. Adegoke, The Nigerian police force and the challenges of security in Nigeria, *Journal of Security* (2014).

⁹M. B Afolabi, J. Lawanson, and B. A. Oylola, Policing in Nigeria: A performance appraisal 2009 – 2015 (2016). Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/policing-in-nigeria-a-performance-appraisal> Retrieved May 12, 2019.

¹⁰Nigeria Police Force, "History of the Nigeria Police Force." *Nigeria Police Force Website* (2019). Available at: https://www.npf.gov.ng/aboutus/History_Nigeria_Police.

¹¹*ibid*.

commissioner of police, 2 Assistant commissioners, 1 Superintendent, 1 Assistant Superintendent, a Pay Master, Quarter Master, Master Tailor and 250 other ranks.”¹² While the “Hausa Constabulary” was in the hinterland, the Lagos police force policed the crown colony.

In Calabar, another force was established - the Niger Coast Constabulary which was found in 1894. Formed under the newly proclaimed Niger Coast Protectorate, the constabulary was modeled after the Hausa Constabulary but with emphasis on military duties of subjugation. Within the time of existence, it mainly engaged in vigorous service and contributed immensely to major expedition against Benin kingdom in 1896.¹³ Consequently, at the time of proclamation of Northern and Southern Protectorate of Nigeria in the early 1900s, part of the Royal Niger Constabulary became the Northern Nigeria Police and part of the Niger Coast Constabulary became the Southern Nigeria Police.¹⁴

The Nigeria Police Force “was officially birth in 1930 when these two regional police forces – the Southern Nigeria Police Force (SNPF) and the Northern Nigeria Police Force (NNPF) – were merged to form the Nigeria Police Force with its headquarters in Lagos.”¹⁵ In the publication of the Nigeria Police Force, “the Colonial Ordinance No. 3 of 1930 incorporated and consolidated the force and later the Police Act of 1943 and the Criminal Procedure Act of 1945 gave the police, statutory power to arrest, search, seize property, detain suspects, and use lawful force in its fight against crime.”

Consequently in 1954, the adoption of a federal constitution led to centralization of the police, making public safety a shared

responsibility between the federal and regional government. However, in 1960 more reformation was brought to bear which saw to the establishment of a Police Council to administer the police force. In line with this development, a police service commission was established with the powers to appoint and discipline members of the force who defaulted, with the exception of the Inspector General of Police who takes orders directly from the President.

Meanwhile, some scholars have construed the role of the police in the colonial state of Nigeria. According to Etannibi Alemika, the police force established by the colonial administrators in different parts of the country were organized and deployed as occupation forces to suppress the people of Nigeria as the colonizers exploited the country’s resources to the benefit of their country.¹⁶ Also, report jointly authored by the Network on Police Reform in Nigeria and Open Society Justice Initiative, states, “Colonial authorities used the police principally to control local communities and tamp down any challenges to colonialism. Colonial police earned a reputation for the brutal subjugation of communities and suppression of resistance to colonial rule. The foundation of the NPF’s brutality was laid during the colonial era.”¹⁷

Nigeria is made up diverse ethnic groups ethnic nationalities that were conquered by the British between 1861 and 1903. With this Alemika noted that: “The colonizers carry out the colonial project through violence means, fraud and deceit. As these nationalities were conquered, a police force was established for the territory. The colonizer feared resistance and police forces under various names were established and employed as an instrument of violence and oppression against the indigenous population. Given the character of colonial rule, police forces were the

¹²*ibid.*

¹³*ibid.*

¹⁴Nigeria Police Force, “History of the Nigeria Police Force.” *Nigeria Police Force Website* (2019). Available at: https://www.npf.gov.ng/aboutus/History_Nigeria_Police.

¹⁵*ibid.*

¹⁶Tobi Soniyi, Newspaper, History of Policing in Nigeria, *Thisday Newspaper*, Thursday, April 4, 2024. Available at: <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2020/11/15/history-of-policing-in-nigeria>

¹⁷*ibid.*

instrument used to sustain alien domination as colonial police were not accountable to the people rather to the colonial authorities.”¹⁸

At its beginning, the Nigeria Police Force was formed to oppress the people and violate their rights. Little wonder the police later found it difficult to protect the people as part of their professional ethics. As Onoge noted: “The police in the consciousness of the people became the symbol of the dictatorial establishment rather than the protector of the people’s rights...As the people had no checks over the arbitrariness of the police, they either avoided police trouble or mediated inevitable contacts with bribe offerings. During the colonial period, police fright was a feature of popular consciousness.”¹⁹

By 1960, the Independence Constitution charged the NPF with the responsibility of maintaining law and order throughout the country, but could not prevent the regions from setting up their local police force, making the regions retain their native authority police in Northern region and the local governing authority police in Western region. However, the Inspector General of Police still superintended over the command of the Nigeria police force while those of the regional structures were under the command of the Commissioners of Police.

In addition, the constitution set out two bodies: the Police Council and the Police Service Commission which was responsible for the organization and administration of the NPF and all matters relating thereto, not being matters relating to the use and operational control of the force or the appointment, disciplinary control and dismissal of members of the Force.²⁰

¹⁸E. E. O. Alemika, “Colonialism, State and Policing in Nigeria.” *Crime, Law and Social Change*, Vol. 20 (1993), p. 192.

¹⁹T. Onoge “Evolution of the Nigerian State: An Overview” *Knowledge Review*, Vol. 24, No.1 (2012), pp. 23-45.

²⁰ Segun Olaniyi, “Police Need Reforms, Restructuring, Not Reorganization, Says HURIWA.” *The Guardian*, June 3, 2020. <https://guardian.ng/news/police-need->

Nigeria Police Reforms

Gobir Panel of 1966

Efforts to entrench professionalism of the Nigeria Police Force came by 1963. Before this time, the country had approved a government based on regional system with the local police existing side by side with the federal police. This structure was however, dropped in 1966 as the local forces were disbanded. This disbandment came to reality as the result of the recommendations of Gobir panel set up in 1966 by the military regime of Aguiyi Ironsi.²¹ This Gobir panel or committee (named after its chairman) was appealed to consider the popularity of dual (local and National) or centralized (unified) police.²² According to this Working Party Report (Gobir Panel): “the local police forces were poorly trained, corrupt and used for partisan political purposes, including the repression of opponents, by traditional rulers and politicians in Northern Nigeria as well as by political parties and governments in power in the Northern and Western Regions.”²³ By implication, the Nigeria Police Force was marked to lack professionalism.

The Gobir Panel could not come up with any tangible recommendations during time of Ironsi regime. Consequently, Gobir committee made its recommendations possible during Gowon’s regime with the unification of both various regionalization programmes for the local police and prison formations in Nigeria to be disbanded which brought all police command and formations under the sole control and supervision of the federal government of Nigeria. This implementation marked the commencement of a unified system of police operations under one Inspector-General of police who was

reforms restructuring-not-reorganization-says-huriwa/.

²¹Tobi Soniyi, “Newspaper, History of Policing in Nigeria,” *Thisday Newspaper*, Thursday, April 4, 2024. “Available at: <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2020/1/15/history-of-policing-in-nigeria>”

²²*ibid.*

²³*ibid.*

answerable to the executive President of Nigeria.

Meanwhile, the police force was suppressed under different military regimes that took over government through a *coup d'état* in 1966. With little enticement during the military government of General Yakubu Gowon (1967-1975), the police were co-opted into governance by the military as state governors and members of the national ruling council and they were respected as partners by the military rulers. Regrettably, the police not favoured under the military between 1983, when General Muhammadu Buhari regime to 1999 when Abdulsalmi Abubakar came to power. Within this era, the police lost its position and prominence in ill-operated government of the military officers, although it continued to feature and incorporated as junior partners as state governors. As the police continued to face neglect and underfunding in the hands of its military partners, the military feared that the police could pose a viable threat to the Armed forces, especially by acting as a counterforce during military coups or revolutions.²⁴

The military government resorted to establishing a special task force with army and police personnel rather than equipping the police to dispense its primary role of promoting and protecting internal security and public safety. These units were headed by a soldier, often junior in rank to the police on the taskforce, which demonstrated the subordinate role assigned to the police. In addition to this, the recruitment and promotion of police personnel were to a large extent suspended by the military government which invariably resulted in the shortage of personnel. The Nigeria Police Force, under the military rulers could not meet up the professional approach as there was lack of dedicated knowledge, capability, behaviour/attitude (integrity), admiration, accountability, self-regulation, courtesy, physical appearance.

However, the return to democracy in 1999 opened a new vista for the police, with high

expectations from the masses. The new constitution created the NPF as a federal institution and prohibited the existence of state or other police bodies. The administration of Olusegun Obasanjo began to set up committees to reform the NPF with a view to making the Five Years Development Plan of the Presidential Committee on Police Reforms 2002 and the blue print for the re-vitalization of the Police a reality.²⁵

The 2002 Presidential Committee on Police Reforms

The return to democratic government in 1999 marked the beginning of an enhanced reform for the Nigeria police as the minister of police affairs unveiled series of programmes, signalling the government's plans to reorganize the force to have "The image of the new police this administration wants to build is that of a courteous, polite, well-disciplined and well behaved police officer and men who are truly friends of the people."²⁶ The Post Express, of July 29, 1999, published that "recruitment drive to increase the force strength, the promotion of senior police officers and members of the rank and files, the provision of training and development facilities and improvements in the salary and welfare package for officers, were initial measures undertaken to realize professionalism in the police force as the period of military rule had wrecked the force."²⁷

In 2000, the ministry of police affairs developed a plan for the police was initiated with significant support from countries like the United States and British governments,

²⁵Y. Muhammad "Globalisation and National Security: Challenges and Prospects to the Nigeria Police Force," "A Dissertation Submitted to NIPSS in Partial Fulfillment of the Award of MNI, 2003," p. 29.

²⁶ "Reorganization of Police Force Underway," *Post Express*, July 29, 1999, and "Jemibewon to Overhaul Police Force," *The Guardian*, July 15, 1999.

²⁷*ibid.*

²⁴*ibid.*

with a detailed strategic plan to guide its implementation. These measures included outlining for the Nigeria police, a mission and value statement and the classification of six managerial objectives and approaches to realize them. The formulated objectives added “the execution of community policing mechanism; the formation of synergic plans with the civil society; development in internal and external communication of the force; the provision of adequate resources; improvements in leadership and the reduction of fear and violent crime in communities.”²⁸ A mechanism to ensure to input on police reform from civil society was established with the support of the United States Office for Transition Initiatives. The Network on Police Reform in Nigeria (NOPRIN) aimed to identify issues for reform, provide civil society input to the police reform process and improve police and civil society relations.”²⁹

This reforms were facilitated during the administration of Tafa Balogun, the then Inspector General of Police, but were followed by stiff belligerent policing strategy. As appointed by President Olusegun Obasanjo, in 2002, Tafa Balogun announced an eight-point agenda mainly at fighting crime and the attendant insecurity in the country, especially in most urban centers. He introduced “Operation Fire-for-Fire” as “the central pillar of his anti-crime strategy.”³⁰ One of the challenges of this operation lied within the question of self-defense for officers. As he outlined “a policy that was technically within officers’ right to act in self-defense, concerns were raised that the police would take it as an enticement to engage in disproportionate use

of force.”³¹ However, Balogun in October 2002 later reiterated the orders as social unrest and confrontations between the police and criminals showing no signs of abating. He stated: “Shoot and kill whenever they want to attack your barracks...All I want to hear is that as they were trying to burn a police station or barracks that no fewer than a certain number, say forty-five, were killed in the process.”³²

Balogun decided to look into the general welfare of the officers by improving the welfare package of officers, promoted more than 70,000 officers, ensured the payment of one year’s salary arrears, and ordered the building of supplementary barracks accommodation for the serving officers.³³ Furthermore, a campaign was launched for the recruitment of 40,000 new officers per year to tackle the rising shortage of personnel. With the pressure from federal government and the international community, Balogun undertook some initiatives to address low-level corruption, in particular the ever-present roadside checkpoints used by police officers to extort money from passing motorists. Apparently, this effort appeared to counterproductive. After further investigation in July 2004, he made it known that 900 policemen had been dismissed from the service for involvement in extortion.³⁴ Balogun had also undertaken a number of other measures to improve the police’s relationship with the general public by building trust. Police Complaints Bureau and Human Rights Desks were formed in every

²⁸ “Nigeria Police Force, Police Transformation in Nigeria, the Strategic Planning Process,” *United States Agency for International Development, Office of Transition Initiative and United Kingdom, Department for International Development*, December 14, 2000.

²⁹ Further information about NOPRIN. Available at: www.cleen.org/noprin.html.

³⁰ *ibid.*

³¹ “Human Rights Group criticizes Fire-for-Fire,” *Daily Trust*, April, 2002, “Student shootings spark concern over Nigerian police tactics,” *Agence France-Presse*, June 24, 2002 and U.S. Department of State, *Nigeria Country Report on Human Rights Practices in 2002*, 2003 and 2004.

³² “Shoot Anti-Police Rioters On Sight, Law Enforcers Told,” *IRIN*, October 21, 2002.

³³ “We’ve restored sanity,” *Newswatch*, January 26, 2003.

³⁴ “Extortion: 900 Policemen Fired,” *This Day*, July 21, 2004.

Police State Commands and with the assistance of the British government. A pilot community policing project was launched in Enugu State which recorded few successes especially in terms of elevating human rights.³⁵

In January 2005, with involvement with financial crime, Tafa Balogun was mandated to resign after it was said that he was under investigation by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), and was replaced by Sunday Ehindero who became the Acting Inspector General of Police thereafter. At his appointment, Ehindero took urgent action on two key issues that appeared, one of which was - designed to improve the public image of the force. He dismantled the infamous "Operation Fire-for-Fire," noting the need to disband from "authoritarian and symbolic justice to a more accountable and responsive force." A new slogan 'To serve and protect with integrity' was chosen to reflect this shift.³⁶ As noted in Punch Newspaper of January 26, 2005, "Days later he announced the elimination of police roadblocks, which had become synonymous with police extortion."³⁷ Despite this declaration, local NGOs and the media reported little evidence of a reduction in police checkpoints and roadside extortion."³⁸

Ehindero further made known an ambitious ten-point reform programme which will address what was referred to as the perceived weakness of the Nigerian Police Force. Thisday, Newspapers of February 2, 2005

³⁵*ibid.*

³⁶"Address delivered by Sunday Ehindero, Acting Inspector General of Police to the maiden conference of senior police officers at Force Headquarters, Abuja," 25 January 2005, and also "IG scraps Operation Fire-for-Fire," *Punch*, January 26, 2005.

³⁷"Camps to replace roadblocks – Ehindero," *This Day*, February 2, 2005.

³⁸"Nigeria Roads Shows Corruption's Depth," Dow Jones Newswires, April 25, 2005, "An Encounter with Nigeria's Traffic Police," BBC News Africa, June 2, 2005, and "A Police of Shame," *This Day*, June 19, 2005.

observed that "the programme which was divided into ten plans of action was to address a broad range of issues, ranging from improving the intelligence and investigative capacity of the police, combating violent and economic crimes, conflict prevention, community policing, improving relationships with the general public, anti-corruption to improving the salary and welfare package of officers. However, there was no mention of trying to improve human rights or reduce torture or deaths in police custody as being part of the ten-point programme."

Human Rights Watch was encouraged initially as Ehindero talked with apparent earnestness about the necessity to modify "the philosophy and attitudes within the force and his commitment to reform, noting that he was one of the senior officers to recognize to Human Rights Watch." His insistence that the perpetrators of alleged human rights violations should be first internally investigated was welcomed by Human Rights Watch, and if found guilty, will be taken to court for prosecution. However, according to Human Rights Watch, this remained in the realm of mere rhetoric and empty promises. When the Acting Inspector General was asked by Human Rights Watch, for details of this programme and how it would be implemented, he was vague and unable to provide substantive information.³⁹

The 2006 Muhammad Danmadami Committee on Police Reform

As reported "the Danmadami Presidential Committee was set up by the administration of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo which submitted its final report in May 2006. The Committee was given eight terms of reference which covers a whole range of areas that concern the efficient functioning of the NPF."⁴⁰ An evaluation and

³⁹Human Rights Watch interview with Sunday Ehindero, Acting Inspector General of Police, Abuja, March 17, 2005.

⁴⁰Y. Muhammad "Globalisation and National Security: Challenges and Prospects to the Nigeria Police Force," "A Dissertation Submitted to NIPSS in

analysis of the eight broad terms of reference would be carried out thus: the committee was armed “to Review and Recommend Measures on the Re-Organization, Administration, Operations and Control of the NPF with a view to Enhancing Effectiveness and Efficiency in its Operations and Service Delivery.”⁴¹

This aspect of the final report examined “the organization of the NPF, functions and operations of the NPF, restructuring of the NPF, investigation and restructuring of ranks, the administrative structure of the police, funding, police personnel audit and rationalization, control of the NPF, the appointment of the IGP, Police Service Commission, and Ministry of Police Affairs.”⁴² The recommendations here are centred on ensuring that the country maintains a centralized police force which is well funded and efficient in its discharge of duties to citizens of Nigeria. That law books which govern the operations of the NPF be provided besides re-organizing the administrative structure at the force headquarters. Others are the rationalization of undesirable elements within the force, and that the FRSC and Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps are merged with the Police for effective performance. The insulation of the NPF from partisan politics by ensuring that the IGP’s appointment and deposition be sanctioned by two-thirds majority of the Senate on recommendation of the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

The second terms of reference include to “Re-appraise existing strategies and of crime prevention and control, including the intelligence and investigative capabilities of the force and make recommendations towards improvement. Areas examined by this report include structure of the NPF in terms of its directorates, crime prevention strategies and measures, protective security, patrol cars,

road blocks, anti-vice squads, regional and city maps, riot control units, highway patrol and marine division. Others are law and police duties, using criminal records and statistics for crime control, intelligence gathering and investigative capabilities of the force, criminal investigation, logistics support for the Force, Zonal and State CID’s and the crime branch.”⁴³

Recommendations made by the committee in this regard were geared towards improving crime investigation and prevention strategies/capabilities of the NPF which included in the third terms of Reference: “To examine force recruitment policy, equipment scope and standard of training and other personnel development activities and make recommendations for the modern Nigeria Police.”⁴⁴ This part of the final report discussed issues that impact directly on NPF standards which are: “(i) Qualifications requirement for entry into the force; (ii) Standards of facilities at training Institutions and their operational capabilities; (iii) The upgrading of the Police Academy in Kano to a degree awarding institution; (iv) Staffing at the institutions and their remunerations and overseas training; and, (v) Formation of Advisory Councils for the Police training institutions.”⁴⁵

Most of the recommendations concerning these issues are geared towards improving training standards at institutions and standards of facilities obtainable at Police institutions all aimed at boosting operational effectiveness of the Police force especially through staff development.⁴⁶

The fourth terms of reference included to: “examine ways and means for enhancing remuneration and welfare package of the Police, including provision of adequate office and housing accommodation with a view to boosting morale of officers and

Partial Fulfillment of the Award of MNI, 2003,” p. 30.

⁴¹*ibid.*

⁴²Y. Muhammad “Globalisation and National Security...

⁴³*ibid*

⁴⁴Y. Muhammad “Globalisation and National Security...

⁴⁵*ibid.*

⁴⁶*ibid.*

men.”⁴⁷ This aspect of the report specifically examined issues such as; “remuneration and allowances of NPF officers; mechanism for negotiation of salary and working conditions; economic empowerment of Police officers; medical care; uniforms and accoutrement; police schools and education of Police children; recreational and sporting facilities; promotion and deployment; and accommodation.”⁴⁸

The recommendations here are centred on drastically improving conditions of service of Police personnel and their general welfare. These are with a view to boosting their morale and improve performance on the job so as to safeguard lives and property in the country. The police according to the report is lacking in most of the aspects enumerated above.

The fifth Term of Reference was geared towards “ascertaining the general and specific causes of low public opinion and confidence in the police, particularly on corruption issue and proffer ways of restoring public trust in the institution”⁴⁹ Aspects of this term of reference discussed the following and made recommendations; “general causes of low public opinion and confidence in the police; police performance in crime prevention and control; corruption and extortion; and, brutality, unlawful arrest and detention and incivility.”⁵⁰ Recommendations in this regard were aimed at boosting public perception of the NPF.

The sixth term of reference was to look at the “provisions of adequate logistics support for the force (including transportation, investigation equipment, and information and communication technology).” The Danmadami committee made recommendations in the following areas: “Transportation e.g. boats and launches, police air wing, among others; office buildings, charge offices, police stations and posts;

information and communication technology (ICT); arms and ammunition; police horses; bomb disposal unit; riot kits personal equipment; uniform and accoutrement; bullet Proof Jacket; police and other station records; and reform of police mobile force (PMF).”⁵¹

With the NPF having obsolete equipment and other logistics and in some cases seriously lacking same, recommendations made by the committee were centred greatly on improving the operational capabilities of the NPF in all ramifications with a view to increasing their performance levels.

The seventh term of reference included to: “examine the issue of community policing and recommend how best it can be adapted and adopted in Nigeria.”⁵² The references were: “inadequate budgeting to the NPF from 2000-2004 in spite of increase in number of personnel yearly; deterioration in the application and enforcement of various public service rules and financial regulations and force regulations and orders; corruption by members of the force especially bribery and extortion in the course of performing their functions; the police x-squad be re-organized, empowered and deployed to all sectors of the nation so as to fight corruption; the implementation of the recommendations of the Danmadami committee; that the FRSC has encroached into the area of traffic police (highway patrol) and other policing duties relating to traffic control; and, the formation of three Advisory Councils for the Police Academy Kano, Police Staff College, Jos and all other Police Colleges.”⁵³

M.D. Yusuf Presidential Committee on the Reform of the Nigeria Police Force of 2008

The third committee, established by President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua and led by retired IGP Alhaji M.D.Yusuf, convened in 2008 to consolidate these recommendations. Y. Muhammad noted that “in April 2008, this committee submitted a white paper with five

⁴⁷*ibid.*

⁴⁸*ibid.*

⁴⁹Y. Muhammad “Globalisation and National Security...”

⁵⁰*ibid.*

⁵¹*ibid.*

⁵²*ibid.*

⁵³Y. Muhammad “Globalisation and National Security...”

chapters of general areas for change. The committee emphasis on the centrality of human security in police service, which provides grounds for making citizens' security a primary responsibility of the federal government. The committee acknowledged that most of past reports' conclusions were eventually ignored and not implemented, and that therefore the IGP should set up a task force to implement the recommendations of this committee. The committee argued production of definitive and practical measures for the enhancement of effective police service delivery with intervention points for external development partners. They also highlighted same measures needed to completely transform the NPF into an efficient and proficient agency for effective law and order maintenance."⁵⁴

Unlike the first and second, "the third presidential reform committee led to concrete measures implemented by the Nigerian government between 2009 and 2011. Substantial funding was also dedicated, following the recommendations of Section 3 of the white paper, which invited international donors such as the Department for International Development (DfID). However, these efforts did not produce meaningful improvements to the force. For instance, the DfID-funded training programmes failed to contextualize their curricula and democratic values to Nigeria's domestic norms."⁵⁵ Additionally, the training was developed by external, western, non-police consultants instead of experienced police officers.⁵⁶ Moreover, the reforms failed to address many critical administrative issues impacting police officers' performance and job safety.

⁵⁴Innocent Chukwuma, "'Motions without Movement': Report of Presidential Committees on Police Reforms in Nigeria." *CLEEN Foundation*, 2008.

⁵⁵Alice Hills, "The Dialectic of Police Reform in Nigeria," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* Volume 46, No. 2 (May 14, 2008): 215–34. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022278X08003200>.

⁵⁶*ibid.*

The white paper proposed the following measures "to improve police officers' sense of security and honor: creation of urban mapping systems, transparency in recruitment and promotion, life insurance for police officers, education for children of police, guaranteed housing for families of police officers who die in the line of duty, mandatory training on community policing, and improved transportation."⁵⁷ However, these reform measures were not taken and all these issues remain unresolved today. There are two reasons for the second committee's overall failure to meet its reform goals. Internally, "the effective implementation of a cross-departmental initiative requires strategic collaboration frameworks and transparent oversight agencies, which were absent. Secondly, though international donors supported the initiative, their involvement was not localized; while human rights and democratic norms may seem noble and promising during a two-day offsite training with transportation and lodging compensation, when police officers return to their unsafe, smelly, and dilapidated barracks, these norms seem so distant from their circumstances as to be irrelevant."⁵⁸

Assessment of Police Reform Regimes

Looking at the police reforms from 1966 to 2008, it is difficult to observe any significant changes in the conduct and attitudes of the Nigerian Police Force toward entrenching professionalism. The reform initiatives tended to be superficial and disjointed. None of these reforms during the period under review acknowledged the existence of the problems of torture and deaths in custody, let alone prioritized human rights protection which is the fulcrum of professionalism. While there were improvements in the salary and welfare package for officers and an increase in the size of the force, local human rights organizations and lawyers stated that there was no marked reduction in the level of human rights

⁵⁷*ibid.*

⁵⁸Alice Hills, "The Dialectic of Police Reform in Nigeria..."

violations, such as torture, killings and extortion, committed by the police.

The Danmadami reform report which worked on eight terms of reference, was never implemented by the government that set it up, in spite of the worthwhile recommendations it made concerning almost all areas that concerned police operations in the country. It must be stressed at this point that it was the Obasanjo administration that instituted it in 2006 at the twilight of the tenure of the administration. However, his successor Umaru Musa Yar'Adua went ahead to initiate another police reform panel with four terms of reference that includes the review of previous efforts, reports, and government white papers on the re-organization, restructuring and re-positioning of the NPF.

One would have thought that instead of inaugurating another committee, the Yar'Adua administration would have gone straight ahead with the implementation of the Danmadami committee report. This is because the M. D. Yusufu report agreed with most aspects of recommendations made by the Danmadami committee; although it went further to make cost estimates and implementation strategies. Besides most aspects of the two reports seem to be similar and agree on the same issues irrespective of the terms of reference.

The accountability of the security forces, including the police, can be improved in two ways. This is by first of all strengthening norms and secondly institutions. Strengthening norms and building institutions would create an environment in which "civil society can hold the security forces to account, both directly, for instance through legal action, and indirectly, through capable civil oversight bodies."⁵⁹

Conclusion

The gaining of independence on 1st October 1960, made Nigerians have high hopes for charting their own destiny especially in terms of development and the control of their own affairs. However, this aspiration was to change

as the January 1966 *coup de tat* by young military officers interrupted civil rule with its consequence of ushering in long periods of military rule in the country's history. The NPF became a victim of military rule as the military neglected its funding, strengthening and re-positioning especially against the backdrop of inheriting a colonial Police force which never aligned with the principles of professionalism. The Gobir Panel of 1966, the Presidential Committee on Police Reforms of 2002, the Muhammad Danmadami Presidential Committee on Police Reform of 2006 and the M.D. Yusufu Presidential Committee on the Reform of the Nigeria Police Force of 2008, were possible attempts made by the government within the chronological scope of this study, to restore professionalism in the Nigeria Police Force.

These reforms have been linked with possible failure as there were no connections with the principles of professionalism and the operations of the police in Nigeria. From 1966, the Nigeria Police Force, under the military rulers could not meet the professional approach as there was lack of specialized knowledge, competency, behaviour/attitude, respect, accountability, self-regulation, politeness, and physical appearance. The police became an instrument of molestation, violence, corruption, among others, in the hands of military administrators.

The return to democracy in 1999 opened a new vista for the police. The new Constitution created the NPF as a federal institution and also prohibited the existence of state or other police bodies. Emerging from the shadow of military rule, the government from that moment struggled to improve on the level of professionalism of the NPF's basic policing skills and counter-violence capacity and to cultivate relationships with local communities. These improvements were essential due to the police's pivotal role in consolidating civilian rule and upholding democracy, especially by providing good security. Unfortunately, like the ones before them, the reforms made little visible improvement in terms of professionalism especially by upholding the

⁵⁹Alice Hills, "The Dialectic of Police Reform in Nigeria..."

principles of human rights and obtaining public trust.

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