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Kidnapping and Security Challenge in Nigeria: Perceived Causes and Solutions

*Olu-Owolabi, E. F.**

Executive Summary

In recent years, the future of Nigerian society has become a pressing concern as security issues apparently dominate government action and more and more nation states are coming under pressure from their own citizens. Some political analysts have diagnosed it as crisis of representative democracy and argued for a stronger role for civil society, to proffer solutions to the challenges confronting what some scholars has classified as challenges of failing democratic state,[1] among which is the challenge of kidnapping.

There is a pervasive security challenge in most developing countries especially Nigeria, and that the police are obviously incapable of arresting the situation. This is evidence, among others, by the incessant inauguration, formulation and launching of new security outfit comprising of police and soldiers. This has become the face of most security outfit in Nigeria like other developing countries. This joint task force is branded differently by different state and even local government such as the Swift Action Squard (SAS) in Osun State, Rapid Response Squard in Lagos, to mention but few.

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1 World Movement for Democracy Confronting the Challenges to Democracy in the 21st Century. Retrieved on 21st cot. 2013 from www.wmd.org

Introduction

Insecurity is best understood by first examining what is security. Security is an all encompassing phenomenon that is paramount to individual, entities, communities and even nations. It has to do with self-preservation which is the first law of existence.[2] Security implies a stable, relatively predicable environment in which an individual or group may pursue its ends or objectives without disruption, harm, danger and without fear of disturbance or injury[3]. In the 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[4].

Contrary to the above definition, the security challenge in Nigeria has remained hellish. Many people have argued that government at all levels has not done enough by not confronting the situation head on and dealing with it decisively, others have argued that the situation has a political undertone or inclination calculated to serve the interest of certain political gods, who have been dissatisfied and disgruntled about the political manifestations in the country[5]. Whichever argument forwarded to explain this dreadful situation the fact remains that the generality of the

2 Editorial Leadership News Paper February 1, 2013
3 Editorial Leadership News Paper February 1, 2013
4 Obasanjo, O (2001), The Grand Strategy for National Security, Federal Government Press, Abuja
5 Adagba, O., Ugwu, S. C. and Eme, O. I. (2012). Activities of Boko Haram and Insecurity Question in Nigeria, Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review, Vol. 1, No.9, 77-99.