



**MASS MEDIA AND THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK OF  
SOUTHWEST REGIONAL SECURITY INITIATIVE:  
ASSESSMENT OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL  
IMPLICATIONS ON PERFORMANCE.**

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**Abstract**

This study examined Mass media reportage of Southwest Regional Security (Amotekun) with a special focus on the assessment of the legal framework in terms of constitutional implications on performance. This study adopted structured interview coupled with other secondary materials such as library materials, journals, text books and other desk study. The paper was approached from descriptive angle which is basically qualitative. This study was anchored on the Agenda-setting and Law of Contract theories. Data collected were transcribed from the recorded tape and qualitative analysis carried out in line with research questions. The paper concluded that the selected agency is active in preventing criminality and that its legal framework has helped constitutionally to enhance their performance in the act of protecting lives and properties. Though, dire need to situate their constitutionality. This study found out that the mass media uphold the surveillance and correlational functions of the media especially in the area of mobilization against act of insecurity. It revealed that the establishment of Amotekun was based on the houses of assembly approval to complement Nigeria Police Force. It showed that the agency was not a counter of constitution but validated to support police efforts. It also found out that the initiative is confronted with different criticisms and legal challenge amongst others. It recommended that the mass media should encourage the public to be security conscious, government should consider restructuring agitations, Southwest governors should endeavour to improve the initiative operations via the provision of law to better the operational performance.

**Keywords:** Mass media, legal framework, constitutional implications, Southwest Regional Security, Reportage.

## **Introduction**

In recent times, Nigeria faces immense internal security challenges. Across the Nigeria's federation, pockets of relentlessness, kidnapping, armed banditry, cattle rustling, arms proliferation, ritualism, cultism, religious intolerant, Boko-Haram crises, Farmers-herdsmen conflicts and other violent clashes have escalated in different region of the country. Iloh and Nwokedi (2019), states that the security of lives and properties is an exclusive function of government which cut across all segment of the society. The recurring of social crimes called for the reinvigoration of informal approaches to Nigerian societal security problems.

Odewole and Lamidi (2020), submit that local group formations were noticeable as panacea to criminal threats. These occurrences led to the national debates on community policing across different geo-political setting of the country which led to the establishment of Hisbah, Yaanbanga of Zamfara amongst other vigilante groups. According to Ogbozor (2016), the motive behind the formation of vigilantism is to safeguard lives, properties, complement security agencies through gathering intelligent information, arrest subjected criminals and hand them over to police. In addition, combine security with social development. Members of these groups are drawn from the local community with high level of reputation for commitment to peace and tranquility in their various community.

In the southwest, there outfits of vigilante groups, Agbekoya, Oodua peoples Congress (OPC) before the advent of Southwestern Nigerian security Network codenamed Amotekun. The security outfit was created to battle criminality in the region which consist Lagos, Oyo, Ogun, Osun, Ondo and Ekiti States respectively. Since its creation, Amotekun is subjected to different opinions, the northern extraction described it as the military wing in disguise. Most importantly, Mr. Abubakar Malami, the Attorney General and Minister of Justice pronounced the initiative as illegal; and slight on the exclusive legislation of police as the only legal agency capable of providing security of lives and properties.

The aforementioned statements heralded total condemnation from legal icons such as Chief Afebabalola (SAN) and Mr. Femi Falana (SAN) who described the reaction of the Attorney General as lacking legal locus standi. The media are not left out in the combat against insecurity in Nigeria. Mass media are described as both the technological and social systems that facilitate the dissemination of information to a large, scattered and anonymous audience (Iwolawagh, 2009). The media is a principal player in the corridor of national security, they serve as watchdog capable of blowing the whistle to call attention to serious national issues (Adache, 2010). The

media are to be conscious of public impending hazards, they must cover and analyze significant developments within a given society. They are cardinal to the maintenance and sustenance of peace in the society, of course, they are considered to be very important in conflict management.

Nigerian Mass media must stress on the need for attitude change among Nigerians if people must experience genuine development. In a nutshell, the media perform the function of public interest articulation in the evolution of public opinion. Indeed, they are the voice of the voiceless. Therefore, the media and the general public must rise to the challenge of combating rising insecurity in the nation by embarking on communication-based approaches that would effectively stigmatize such acts in the society. Chimezie (2010), affirms that the surveillance function of the media is critical to national security.

In spite of these difference ideas on the creation of “Amotekun” as a security outfit, this paper seeks to investigate the activities of the mass media.

### **Objectives**

1. To investigate the extent at which the Mass media report the activities of the selected regional security initiative.
2. To ascertain the legal framework of the selected regional security initiative.
3. To examine the implications of the legal framework on the performance of the selected regional security initiatives.
4. To determine the challenges confronted by the selected regional security initiative in the discharge of their security responsibility.

### **Literature review**

#### **History of vigilantism**

The concept of safety to man is as old as existence itself. It is as old as organized society. Before the establishment of the modern police system the world over, primitive or non-literate societies made use of self-help groups to secure their societies. These groups functioned in semblance to vigilante groups that exist today. Vigilante is a word traceable to Latin ‘Vigilare’ which means to keep awake (Morey,2021). Its earliest use in English was to refer to a member of a vigilance committee set up to suppress and punish crime summarily, as when the process of law appears inadequate (<https://www.merian-webster.com>)

Vigilantism is an act of enforcing the law and investigating and punishing offenses and crimes without legal authority (Fourchard, 2008) The history can be traced back to

early civilization with a few examples. Around 1750 BC, there existed the code Hammurabi which as engraved in stone. It detailed 282 sections of the code of conduct anchored on how individuals should treat one another in the society. Around 1000 BC, the Mosaic Law emerged. The code of Hammuerabi and Mosaic Law formed the basis upon which policing as is known today was created. In (27 BC), the first emperor of Rome, Augustus Ceaser was instrumental in creating what is known as the *Urban Cohorts*. The urban cohorts were men from the praetorian Guard, who were charged with ensuring peace in the city. However, the rise of violent crimes made Augutus to form the *Vigils* who were not affiliated with the praetorian guard, but were charged with fighting crime and fires. Notably, the Vigils were given the power to protect and arrest (Ojo & Ekhaton,2020).

Apart from crime, a non-functional society breeds vigilantism. This depicts the situation that led to the founding of America as a nation. It can be said that its history in America is as old as the country itself.<sup>1</sup> In many ways, the history of the United States is largely based on vigilantism. On December 16, 1773 and as part of the resistance to British taxation, it led to the throwing away of 342 chests of tea into Boston Harbor by American Colonists in what is today known as the Boston Tea Party (Bateson,2021). Consequently, the first American vigilante movement, (the South Carolina Regulators (1767-1769), occured about 175 years after the first permanent English settlement of Jamestown. In essence, the act existed long before the word was introduced to the English language Bateson, 2021)

Vigilante groups had existed in south western part of Nigeria since the colonial period as the “hunter guard” or “night guard” system. This was in a bid to control crimes like theft and other antisocial conducts. In the spirit of collective responsibility, neighbourhood watch existed before the colonial experience. They were made up of traditional structures like age grades, secret societies or vocational guilds like the hunters, farmers or fishermen. These social, religious and vocational structured beyond went beyond neighbourhood watch and also functioned as crime control, law and order in the society (Ojo &Ekhaton,2020). For example, here were salient novelties in the legal system of the Benin kingdom and other areas in pre-colonial Africa that prompted justice, peace and order amongst people and communities.

Crime is an integrated aspect of societal process. Social processes not only influence the prevalence of crime but also how it is investigated. The rising cases of crimes like robbery, kidnapping and incessant attacks of people in their farmlands in the South

West, prompted the founding of Amotekun to help fight the situation. It was launched on the **9 January, 2020**.

### **Role of Mass media in sustainable development and campaigns against insecurity**

Globally, the mass media transmit fresh information and ideas to their numerous target audience. This indicates that they are indeed agents of change among people in the society. As a watchdog of the society, the influence of the mass media today transcends the earlier time role because considerable attention has been paid to how the media are structured, controlled and operated. It has become increasingly clear that the mass media are active in framing issues and promote news stories that serve the needs and concerns of the society. Nonetheless, their operations are central to the societal development, and their legitimacy is shielded by different layers of ideology ( Danlandi & Haruna,2014).

Nigeria situation is no different as the mass media tend to focus more on societal development especially issues that borders on public yearnings and interests. Section 22 of the 1999 constitution as amended provides that:

“The press, radio, television and other agencies of the Mass media, shall at all times be free to uphold the Fundamental objectives contained in this chapter and uphold the responsibility and accountability of government to the people”

In addition to the above constitutional responsibilities conferred on the mass media, there are other roles which they are expected to play in national development. They provide a forum through which the governed could react to government policies, as in articulation and pursuit of national interest and also help in setting-agenda in areas such as politics, social, culture and economic development of the nation. It is important to understand that the expectation of the mass media with regard to their contribution to development lies in their ability to put the government of the day under close monitoring.

This is made manifest in the principle of the media watchdog in examining the conduct of people at the helm of affairs for national integration (Oladokun, 2010). According to Jibo and Okoosi (2003), the media help to create and maintain a sense of nationhood and undertake developmental tasks through education, building

political stability, informing public opinions and create forum for public discussions as well as serve as watchdogs on government to prevent all forms of abuses.

The capability of the media as a means of communication to promote peace or resolve conflicts cannot be overemphasized because the mass media are powerful tool of communication in peace and conflict situations. In an effort to entrench peaceful co-existence, the media as the key weapon for conflict resolution, social justice and opinions moulder must perform these transformative roles by undergoing paradigm shift in their approach towards social and conflict reportage in Nigerian societies. This shift should be capable of providing a place for tranquility via media orientations and operations in a bid to reduce the possibilities of violence through conflicts (Akpan, Erin & Olofu-Adeoye, 2013).

Pate (2002), submits that in times of conflict, information is regarded as a critical factor in escalating or reducing tension. The scholarly idea is that the mass media have exponent influence on resolving conflict effectively otherwise assuming conflict resolution functions. Tahir (2009), posits that the role of the mass media in dousing conflict is to educate, correct misrepresentations, interest identifications, proffering solutions and bridging of communication gaps among the erring groups. The media should develop ideas of a conflict, strive to transmit the understanding of the ideas to their audience(s) in a way that reflects the truth in all ramifications (Ndolo, 2011).

Mass media are weapons through which society obtains their images that they will derive their sense of reality. The mass media are vital in nation's integration, government can hardly survive without effective use of the mass media. They are so entrenched in a developing society that a politician in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Edmund Burke described the media as the fourth estate of the realm, referring to the three major powers in medieval times in European society which are the Nobles, Clergy and Common (McQuail, 2000).

According to Tejumaiye (2011), Nigerian media still engaging themselves in significant roles of ensuring the efforts to shape democratic culture, attitude, behavioural patterns and fundamental moral values. The media according to the scholar play major roles in business, politics, socio-economic and positively affect people's lives on daily basis irrespective of the insecurity challenges confronted by the nation.

Today, the major challenges confronting Nigeria and by extension are the problem associated with security. This has posed a serious threat to the nation's development. Various nefarious ethnic militia groups, armed groups, religious fanatics, terrorists and bandits are notable evidence of insecurity in the land that gave birth to untimely

death, rape, arson, bombing, kidnapping, armed robbery, injustices and corruption. These incidences resulted in psychological trauma for families and individuals respectively. Akinyeye (2001), argues that the general insecurity in Nigeria requires urgent solution to safeguard unforeseen collapse or balkanization of the nation's system.

In spite of the gloomy situation, the mass media are thereby seeing as the institution capable of eliciting actions towards curbing the ugly trend. Jan (2011), contends that the mass media are equipped to foster human security and capable of reinforcing motives for resolving conflicts, war and violence situations through the dissemination of information, furthering awareness, promotion of participatory governance and addressing perceived grievances. The media are to provide a wide variety of ideas that is capable of keeping people properly informed about the activities of government concerning security.

Mass media have embarked on various programmes on crime awareness in a bid to encourage security consciousness in Nigerian society. Few of such programmes are police Diary on Radio Nigeria, Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), sponsored programme on Radio Nigeria titled "Eagle on Radio", Crime messages via jungles regularly running on television and crime reportage in print media. Ohewere and Kur (2001), submit that the most critical role of the media should be in helping to prevent the severity of crime. This indicates that the mass media influence the society and determine dominant perceptions, attitude, behavioural change and values.

Mile (2009), avers that through the mass media, citizens must be educated on their rights and privileges so as to be conscious of their immediate environment against violence and crime. In a nutshell, the mass media are significant and central in people's lives because they must inform impartially about government policies, expose citizens to operations of government and also hold government accountable to the people.

### **Insecurity In Nigeria**

Insecurity is the absence of peace, order and security. Insecurity is defined as the state of being open to danger or threat of danger; lack of confidence. It is the state of being exposed to risk<sup>2</sup>. Where there is insecurity there can be no freedom, no freedom of the press, and no true democracy.



The spate of insecurity in Nigeria reached an alarming rate in the 2020 Global Terrorism Index (GTI) which ranked Nigeria as the 3<sup>rd</sup> most terrorized country in the world (check GTI). In the 2022 ranking Nigeria dropped three places ranking sixth in the 2022 global terrorism index, which has been seen as an improvement by experts. The nature of insecurity in Nigeria is regionalized, insurgency and banditry in the north; kidnapping in the east and south; ritual killings in the east and west.

In South West Nigeria, the governors of the six states in the region Ekiti, Lagos, Oyo, Ondo, Ogun and Osun State, collaboratively came up with the security outfit codenamed 'Operation Amotekun' (Yoruba: meaning 'Leopard') which was launched early January, 2020, in Ibadan, the capital of Oyo State to complement the efforts of the police.

### **Security and the Nigeria Constitution**

The Federal Republic of Nigeria operates Federal system of Government, a three-tier government, it consists of the Federal, State and Local Government and they all derive their power from the Nigeria Constitution. One feature of true federalism is the independence of the federating unit from the center. As observed in the United States of America which operates true federalism in the true sense of it. The Federating States has autonomy, each state generates its income and operates its own security outfit.

But Nigeria does not operate true Federalism. Nigeria's federalism has been a source of intense controversy since the pre-independence era, the country's federalism is plagued by "paradoxes, pathologies and irregularities." Nigeria operates what can be term unitary federalism. This is a system of government unique to Nigeria, it is a system of federalism wherein the federating unit has no clear independence from the central government or as in this case the federal government. Nigeria is an example of a "federation without federalism.

An instant where the federating unit does not have independence is in the area of security. Security and defense are on the exclusive legislative list, meaning that only the Federal Government has the power to make laws regarding security of the Federation, section 4(2) of the Nigeria Constitution provides that the National Assembly shall have the power to make laws on matters contained in the exclusive legislative list. The power to legislate on the military or armed force in Nigeria is exclusively reserved for the Federal Governmental. Item 17 of the exclusive legislative list to the Nigeria Constitution provide for the word 'Defense'.



Also, Item 38 of the exclusive legislative list of the Nigeria Constitution provide for armed forces which include; Air force, Army and Navy. Also, item 45 of the exclusive legislative list provides; ‘Police and other government security services established by law’. Item 17, 38 and 45 of the exclusive legislative list, is to the effect that it is only the Federal Government of Nigeria that has the power to make laws or legislate on any matter that relates to defense, military and the Nigeria police forces. Section 217 and 214 of the Nigeria Constitution also stipulate that, there shall be an armed force which also includes the Nigeria police, which shall be established by an Act of the National Assembly.

### **The Ineffectiveness of The Central Police and The Need for State to Step**

**In** The 1999 constitution (as amended) provides for a single police force. Section 214(1) of the Constitution provide as follows: ‘There shall be a police force for Nigeria which shall be known as the Nigeria police force, and subject to the provisions of this section no other police force shall be established for the Federation of any part thereof’

The Nigeria police force is not only a creation of the constitution but also a creation of an Act of parliament. Section 3 of the Nigeria Police Act provide that, there shall be established for Nigeria a police force. The power and function of the Nigeria police force are provided for in section 214(1) (2) (b) of the Nigeria Constitution<sup>3</sup> which provides that ‘the members of the Nigeria police force shall have such powers and duties as may be conferred upon them by law’. In this regard, section 4 of the Nigeria police Act provides thus;

The police shall be employed for the prevention and detection of crime, the apprehension of offenders, the preservation of law and order, the protection of life and property and the due enforcement of all laws and regulation with which they are directly charged and shall perform such military duties with or outside Nigeria as will be required by them by, or under the authority of this or any other Act.

*Fawehimi V. Inspector General of Police*<sup>4</sup>the court stated that;

Police power is the exercise of the sovereign right of the government to promote order safety, health, morals and general warfare within

constitutional limits and it is an essential attribution of government, indeed, the police are the outward civil authority of the power and might of a civilized country. The generality of the public is potentially affected one way or the other in their action or inaction.

The Police have been faced with an avalanche of problems; these issues include the accountability of the Police Force and the high surge of crimes in different states of the country. the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) which is underfunded, understaffed and overstretched in the discharge of their core mandate of maintaining law and order, and protecting lives and property. The inability of the Police under exclusive Federal control to perform its duties a huge failure to the federal Government and a breach of its social contract agreement.

### **The legality or otherwise of Amotekun**

The Nigeria Police Force, being part of the executive arm of government, has been unable to single-handedly tackle the security challenges in the country. Thus, the need for regional security initiatives arose, especially in South West Nigeria, to complement the efforts of the police in eradicating the prevalent ritual killings, kidnappings, armed robbery among others<sup>5</sup>.

*“Amotekun is not a duplication neither is it a replacement for the Nigeria Police Force. Amotekun is a complement that gives our people the confidence that they are being looked after by the people they elected into office. We do not want this to create fear in the mind of anyone. We are not creating a regional police force. We are not oblivious of the steps we need to follow in forming a State police. We are law abiding citizens of Nigeria. We know that will require a constitutional amendment and we are not there yet”* (PM News, 2020).

Part III of Chapter VI, Section 214 (1) of the 1999 Constitution (as amended) states that “There shall be a police force for Nigeria, which shall be known as the Nigeria Police Force, and subject to the provisions of this section no other police force shall be established for the Federation or any part thereof.” Going by this section of the constitution, one might conclude albeit wrongly that setting up of amotekun corps is unconstitutional. Minister of Justice, Mr. Abubakar Malami (SAN) said:

*“The setting up of the paramilitary organization called “Amotekun” is illegal and runs contrary to the provisions of the Nigerian law. The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended) has established the Army, Navy and Airforce, including the Police and other numerous paramilitary organizations for the purpose of the defense of Nigeria*

The 1999 Constitution (as amended) explicitly states that the onus of protecting lives and property rests on the government. Section 14(2)(b) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) provides that “*the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government...*” The word “government” here, as interpreted in Section 318 (1) under Part IV of Chapter VIII, “includes the Government of the Federation, or of any state, or of a local government council or any person who exercises power of authority on its behalf;”

On the 14<sup>th</sup> of February, 2020, Ekiti State House of Assembly passed the bill setting up the Amotekun Corps in the state<sup>6</sup>. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of March, 2020, Ondo State House of Assembly passed the State Security Network Agency and Amotekun Corps Bill. Similar bills establishing Amotekun were passed same day by the Lagos, Oyo, Ogun and Osun State House of Assembly.

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### **Theoretical Framework**

This study is anchored on both the contract and Agenda-setting theories respectively.

### **Contract theory**

The Social Contract Theory (SCT) one of the well-known theories of the origin of the state. One proponent of this theory, Thomas Hobbes in the origin of the state tried to justify the idea of an inviolable absolute sovereign that is capable of maintaining law and order in a state. Hobbes argued that the state had arisen out of a voluntary agreement or social contract made between individuals who recognized that only the establishment of sovereign power could safeguard them from the insecurity of the state of nature (Keneth, 2021). By the social contract which is an agreement that cannot be revoked by the people or their descendants, the people relinquished all their natural rights and powers to an absolute sovereign. In the newly formed state, the primary business of the absolute sovereign is to maintain law and order, and ensure the security of all. The failure of the Federal Government to secure lives and properties is a breach of its social contract with Nigerians gave rise to the creation of *Amotekun*, by the State Government of the Southwestern state. The creation of this security outfit by the State government is a fulfilment of its part of the agreement in the social contract theory.

### **Agenda-setting Theory**

Agenda-setting theory states that the media set agenda mainly when people perceived news stories as relevant and especially when the issue covered is not known to them in the first instance. The theory explains that the media through various reportage of issues decide what the dominant discussion would look like. The theory contends that the media may not tell us what to think but re-direct peoples' minds to what to think about (McQuail, 2008). By reporting issues incessantly, the media usually move those important issues from the press agenda to public spheres. Bernard-Cohen (1963), submits that the media may not be successful most times in telling people what to think but successful in telling its readers what to think about.

### **Methodology**

This study utilized both primary and secondary sources. The primary source involved the usage of structured interview method while the secondary sources include the textbooks, journal articles, conference proceedings, government publications, internet materials, library materials and desk study on the subject under discourse. This study was approached from the descriptive and analytical angle which is basically qualitative and predominantly non-numerical. Communication exchanges during these interactions solely hinged on the objectives of this study.

Descriptive studies tend to explain and describe a given concept while analytical aims at explaining or establish why a particular situation is that way or how it comes to be (Wilmer & Dominick, 2000). Descriptive and analytical are concern with the cause-effect relationship among variables and to develop explanatory inferences (Odoemelam et al, 2014). These methods were employed to address this study research questions on the limitations of legal framework especially on the operational performance of Southwestern Security Network (Amotekun). This study conducted different structured interviews with selected legal luminaries, public analysts, security experts, government functionaries, political gladiators, members of Amotekun corps, academicians and opinion leaders who represented the sample size for the study. The reason for this method is to harness robust information from extant literature for detailed discussion about the subject matter.

### **Discussion of findings**

**Research question one:** *To what extent has the mass media reported the activities of the selected regional security initiative?*

According to the interviews conducted with media consultants, practitioners and field news reporters, the reportage of crime and “Amotekun” activities were on the high side on daily basis. The interviewees established the surveillance and correlational functions of the media especially in the area of mobilization against acts of insecurity. They listed various programmes such as Police Diary on Radio Nigeria, The Eagle on Radio Nigeria sponsored by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Crime Pages with crime stories in newspapers such as Punch, Vanguard, The Nation and a host of others. Osadolor (2001), agrees that the most critical role of the media should be to prevent the severity of crimes. Orhewere and Kur (2004), corroborate with this fact when they submitted that publicity is important in exposing criminal activities in Nigerian society. The scholars added that this could be done through the interpretation and explanation of the implications of happenings on acts of insecurity in Nigeria.

**Research question three:** *What is the legal framework of the selected regional security initiative?*

The participants were of the opinion that the Federal Republic of Nigeria, indeed operates Federal system of Government which is three tiers of government, it consists of the Federal, State and Local Government, they all derive their power from the Nigeria Constitution, but One feature of true federalism is the independence of the federating units from the center. As observed in the United States of America

which operates true federalism in the true sense of it. The Federating States has autonomy, each state generates its income and operates its own security outfit.

The participants unanimously agreed that Nigeria does not operate true Federalism. Nigeria's federalism has been a source of intense controversy since the pre-independence era, the country's federalism is plagued by "paradoxes, pathologies and irregularities." Nigeria operates what can be term as unitary federalism. This is a system of government unique to Nigeria, they describe this kind of federalism as a system wherein the federating unit has no clear independence from the central government or as in this case the federal government. Nigeria is an example of a "federation without federalism.

They cited an instant where the federating unit does not have independence is in the area of security. Security and defense ares on the exclusive legislative list, meaning that only the Federal Government has the power to make laws regarding security of the Federation, section 4(2) of the Nigeria Constitution provides that the National Assembly shall have the power to make laws on matters contained in the exclusive legislative list. The power to legislate on the military or armed force in Nigeria is exclusively reserved for the Federal Governmental. Item 17 of the exclusive legislative list to the Nigeria Constitution provide for the world 'Defense'. Also, Item 38 of the exclusive legislative list of the Nigeria Constitution provide for armed forces which include; Air force, Army and Navy. Also, item 45 of the exclusive legislative list provides; 'Police and other government security services established by law'. Item 17, 38 and 45 of the exclusive legislative list, is to the effect that it is only the Federal Government of Nigeria that has the power to make laws or legislate on any matter that relates to defense, military and the Nigeria police forces. Section 217 and 214 of the Nigeria Constitution also stipulate that there shall be an armed force which also includes the Nigeria police, which shall be established by an Act of the National Assembly.

The participants said the 1999 constitution (as amended) provides for a single police force. Section 214(1) of the Constitution provide as follows: 'There shall be a police force for Nigeria which shall be known as the Nigeria police force, and subject to the provisions of this section no other police force shall be established for the Federation of any part thereof'

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According to the discussants, the Police have been faced with an avalanche of problems thus, the need for regional security initiatives arose, especially in South West Nigeria, to complement the efforts of the police in eradicating the prevalent ritual killings, kidnappings, armed robbery among others. David and Donna (2021), corroborates to the fact that nations must provide security to protect lives and properties of their citizenry.

Therefore, Amotekun is not a duplication neither is it a replacement for the Nigeria Police Force. Amotekun is a complement that gives our people the confidence on security. The participants validated the establishment of Amotekun based on the bill unanimously passed by the involved State Houses of assembly as a complement for the Nigerian Police Force activities.

**Research question three:** *What are the implications of the legal framework on the performance of the selected regional security initiative?*

The participants admitted that the state security network otherwise known as “Amotekun” is a child of necessity brought forth by the prevailing insecurity in Nigeria. The south western state governments have risen up to their duty of protecting lives and property as part of their agreement in the social contract theory.

The agency is not a counter agency to the police nor is the agency meant to usurp the powers of the police. The law establishing the agency makes it mandatory for the agency to work closely with the police. Having the Commissioner of Police as a member of its governing board is a clear indication of the willingness of the agency to work closely with the police.



One of the clear features of true federalism is creation of state owned security agency since the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria operates a federal system of Government. Though in theory Nigeria does not operates a federal system. The creation of the State security network, “Amotekun” is a step in the right direction.

**Research question four:** *What are the challenges confronted by the selected regional security initiative in the discharge of their security responsibility?*

The participants of the interview conducted were unanimously agreed that since the region has been championing restructuring with the emergence of state police created panic specifically from the northern extraction that the “Amotekun” initiative is a conduit pipe to make the agitation a reality. Other challenges confronted are legality issues, conflict with other statutory security agents particularly the Nigerian Police Force (NPF), issue of independent, limitation in terms of sophisticated arms, accountability mechanisms, recruitment process based on the question of indigeneity vis-à-vis citizenship, minimal operational and administrative oversight, constitutional and legal framework issues, deployment for political reasons amongst others. Ikuteyibo (2008), concurs with the aforementioned challenges when the scholar posits that the institutiolization of “Amotekun” initiative would be confronted with gamut of challenges ranging from the administrative issues to legal framework issues.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The menace of insecurity has developed to be a threat to life, property and business activities. The ugly situation discourages both local and foreign investors. This rising insecurity has assumed a dangerous dimension that is negatively affecting the nation’s socio-economic growth. All these are testament of the failure of government security system at providing needed security of lives and properties in line with the fundamental objectives of state policy as stated in Chapter II, Section 14(2) of the Nigerian Constitution. It states that the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government. “Amotekun” initiative is a regional efforts in response to the challenges of insecurity that have ravaged the nation especially Southwest region. Though battling with the constitutionality and legal framework of establishment, the initiative is not illegal based on this study investigations from legal experts but with a dire need to be legalized via the constitution legal codes for better performance. However, the media must also rise to combat the growing rate of insecurity in Nigeria by embarking on issue and communication-based approaches that are capable of putting at bay the dastard acts of insecurity. This can be achieved through research and investigative journalism.

Based on this study findings, the following are recommended:

1. Mass media should sensitize the public to be security conscious, this must be achieved through objective, balanced and fair reportage.
2. Government should consider restructuring agitations and put legal mechanisms in place capable of enhancing regional policing outfits.
3. The Southwestern states governors should step up actions at improving “Amotekun” operations through the provision of law for better operational performance.

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