



**MILITARY DEPLOYMENT IN INTERNAL SECURITY  
OPERATIONS AND CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS  
IN A DEMOCRACY: THE NIGERIAN EXPERIENCE**

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**Abstract:**

This article focuses on the use of the Nigerian military as an internal security apparatus under a democratic government. In view of the recent secessionists' agitation in the South-East region, renewed militancy in the South-South, insurgency in the North-East, kidnapping and ritual killings in the South-West and herder-pastoralist's conflict in the Middle-Belt region which have caused serious security challenges in the country. In response to these challenges, the Nigerian Military, acting under the President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces directives, launched various military operations. These operations include; Operation 'Python Dance 2'; 'Crocodile Smile'; Operation 'L'afiya Dole' (interpreted as peace by force); Operation 'Crocodile Smile 2'; Operation Cat Race; and the 'show of force'. These military operations have not only generated tension and threatened civil-military relations in the different regions; they have also raised questions on the constitutional roles of the Armed Forces in a democracy. Besides, there has been a debate on whether these responses are in conformity with the constitution and if they are politically-expedient at this time. While this article queries the deployment of military as a security apparatus, it however raises a more fundamental question of what is the rationale behind the deployment of military forces against para-military security component statutorily charged with the responsibilities of maintaining peace, order and security. Secondly, the article raises the question of how effective are these military options in the face of public outcry. Lastly, what implication does this have on civil-military relations in Nigeria?

**Keywords:** civil-military relations; insecurity; constitutionality; civil society; Nigeria

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## 1. Introduction

Aside endemic corruption, insecurity has become the commonest feature of the Nigerian state in recent times. The reality of insurgency in the North-East region, renewed militancy in the South-South, secessionists' agitations in the South-East, unending herder-farmers' conflict in the Middle-Belt coupled with the embarrassing spate of kidnappings and ritual killings in the South-West have constituted serious challenges to national security in Nigeria. In response to these seemingly overwhelming challenges, the Nigerian State through its military apparatus launched various operations to quell such insurrections within the state. This action undoubtedly birthed Operation 'L'afiya Dole' (interpreted as peace by force) in the North-East; 'Crocodile Smile' in the South-South; 'Python Dance 2' in the South-East region; Operation 'Crocodile Smile 2' in the South-West and the 'show of force' and Operation "Ayem Akpatuma-Cat Race in Middle Belt areas.

These military operations have generated tension and skepticism within the polity owing to the mistrust that characterizes civil-military relations in Nigeria. It is important to note that suppression and intimidation were the hallmark of civil-military relations in Nigeria's history due to the long years of military rule; an experience still fresh in the minds of the civilian population. Besides constituting a threat to civil-military relations, such development has equally raised questions on the constitution prescribed roles of the Armed Forces, more so, in a democracy. In the same vein, there is also debate whether this is politically-expedient for the Nigerian Government to deploy military in virtually all parts of the country when the police or other paramilitary institution would have been used.

To this end, this article seeks to examine the internalized-military-option embraced by the Nigerian government and its implications on civil-military relations in Nigeria. Structurally, this article is divided into five parts: part one is the introduction, while the second part gives an overview of insecurity issues in Nigeria on a regional basis. Part three analyses the philosophies and operational procedures of the military operation launched by the Nigerian Armed Forces, Part four examines the implications (positive and negative) on the civil population in particular and on the Nigerian democracy in general. Part five which is the final part concludes by looking at options and recommendations.

## 2. Civil Military Relations Theory

Morris Janowitz and Samuel Huntington have been identified as foremost scholars of modern civil- military relation's theory. Huntington has opined that civil-military relations are vital aspects of national security policy (Huntington, 1957). According to him, "*the centrality of national security policy is to enhance the safety of the nation's social, economic and political institutions against threats arising from other independent state*"(Huntington, 1957:1). Huntington further sees civil-military relations are "the

principal institutional component of military security policy". Despite its importance however, Janowitz (1977) argues that there is insufficient study of civil-military relations in developing countries. The underlying problem is that of modern theory is the balance between maintaining military force strong enough to protect and sustain democratic values of the society and the civilian control to be able to prevent any military take-over of the government (Olldashi, 2002: 11).

Huntington conceives the roles of military in politics in two ways; the subjective civilian control of the military and objective civilian control (Huntington, 1957). Samuel Huntington's basic methodological assumptions is that it is possible to define an equilibrium called "*objective civilian control*" that ensures civilian control and maximizes security at the same time. (Huntington, 1957: viii). He argues that "*In practice, officer-ship is strongest and most effective when it most closely approaches the professional ideal; it is weakest and most defective when it falls short of that ideal*" (Huntington, 1957: 11 cited). This means the professionalization of military by the Janowitz thought comes into play here, he avers that professionalizing military, which is the decision making authority within the military world, emphasizes the useful aspect of that institution such as discipline, structure, order and self-sacrifice.

Janowitz argues against the uses of force by the military on the civilian world but really requires the total submission of the military to civilian authority (Janowitz, 1977). Huntington submitted that such arrangement maintained a focus on a political neutral, autonomous and professional officer corps (Huntington, 1957). Articulating Janowitz's position, Olldashi (2002) explains that he (Janowitz) agreed with above assertion of Huntington and referred to the phrase as political neutrality of the military as "problematic", because democratic theory requires military professionals to be neutral, non-partisan, and fully committed to the rules of the political process (Olldashi, 2002).

Therefore the role of the military in civil rule is seen as defending the country from internal insurrection and external attacks. Huntington notes:

*"The military institutions of any society are shaped by two forces: a functional imperative stemming from the threats to the society's security and a societal imperative arising from the social forces, ideologies, and institutions dominant within the society. Military institutions, which reflect only social values, may be incapable of performing effectively their military function". (Huntington, 1957)*

This is in contrast to subjective civilian control in which direction would be intrusive and detailed. Janowitz argues that "subjective" civilian control also occurs when the military wants to check the civilian government (Olldashi, 2002).

With particular reference to Nigeria, the problem facing the country at this time is to know the level of control the civilians will exercise on the military. If the military influence on civil participation like supervising elections and other minor activities like dispersing protesters, curbing crime rates in the country and other internal insurrections as discussed in the study, then the military control on the civil governance

may be too powerful to check, this will result in what Huntington termed weak governance and possibly military coups. However, the overbearing nature of the civilian governance and less roles for the military in the civil participation with attendant onslaught will result to the military too weak to defend the nation from internal insurrection and external attacks.

Huntington submits that, effective civil- military relations should be in the form of objectives civilian control over their armed forces (Huntington, 1957). This control is indicated first by the military adoption of professional ethos and their recognition of boundaries of professional roles. Besides, effective subordination of the military to civilian political leadership that formulates strategic directives on foreign policy and military policies; recognition and approval from political leaders to the professional authorities and autonomy of the military and; minimal intervention of the military in politics and politicians in military affairs are other important factors (Huntington, 1957).

Therefore, the Nigeria military should only serve as a bulwark against social unrest and a modernizing and stabilizing source of organizational strength in the society to prevent subversion or a total collapse of the political order. While the overbearing nature of the military roles in several operations have been applauded by the governments as Francis Fukuyama believes that the first priority of the state is to provide order and defense from external invasion before they can provide universal health or free education, therefore effects on the civil-military relations are better assessed in this study to showcase the coloration on the fundamental human rights of the citizens trampled.

## **2. Recent Security Threats in Nigeria**

Beside conventional threats of natural existence such as flooding, tremor, armed robbery, kidnapping, fire accident and aircraft crashing, Nigeria is plagued with violent security threats emanating from irredentists groups and criminality. These include Niger Delta militancy, Boko Haram crises, Biafra secessionist (IPOB) and frequent clashes between farmers and herdsmen in the Northern part of Nigeria all which have claimed many lives and properties (Nwagboso, 2018). However, while some of these threats have long historical antecedents, others like the menace of Herdsmen and tremor management are recent recurring occurrences in Nigeria. It is therefore imperative that some of the recent threats are discussed.

### **2.1 Insurgency in the North-East Region**

The North-East region of Nigeria has appeared on the world's stage as a home for the Boko Haram Terrorists' group otherwise known as *Jama'atu Ahlis Sunnah Lida'awati wal Jihad*. Several scholarly reports have dated the emergence of Boko Haram to inception of the Nigeria's Fourth Republic in 1999 but with non-violent form (Oladimeji, Olusegun and Oluwafisayo, 2012; Onuoha, 2012; Gilbert, 2014; Onuoha and Ugwuese, 2014). According to Onuoha and Ugwuese (2014), the gruesome murdered of its leader Yusuf

Mohammed in 2009 by the Nigerian Police Force in a manner described by the international community as unacceptable and reminiscent of a society with no regard for the sanctity of human life; imbued with flagrant contravention and abuse of the fundamental human rights sparked off the violent showing of force by Boko Haram.

Gilbert, 2014 avers that the re-emergence of new leadership, Abubakar Shekau in 2010 made the group as a more dynamic and vicious insurgent group fighting against the Nigerian state for the revenge of the death of its pioneer leader. The resurgence of the group since 2010 has constituted a nagging security predicament to the Nigerian state as they have brazenly and unjustifiably embarked on a systematic destruction of lives and property (Gilbert, 2014). Oladimeji, Olusegun and Oluwafisayo (2012) found out that the terror activities of the Boko Haram sect since 1999 have created a state of palpable fear in Nigeria and beyond, even as government was said to have adopted a helpless posture which was worrisome as well as the grievances expressed by the international community as suicide bombing rocked the United Nations Office Complex in Abuja, with fatalities on August 26, 2011; the national headquarters of the Nigeria Police Force on June 16, 2011; and St. Theresa's Catholic Church, Madalla, Niger State, on Christmas Day killing innocent worshippers (Olalekan, 2012) with the brutal torture and killing of a British, Italian and German hostages in 2012 following failed rescue operation by Nigerian and British security forces (Rogers, 2012).

## **2.2 Niger Delta Militancy**

The Niger Delta is the hub of economic activity in Nigeria. With an oil production capacity of almost 3 million barrels per day, the region accounts for 95 percent of the Nigerian government's foreign exchange earnings (Ikokwu 2008). The oil wealth in this region has been a major driver of conflict in the past 40 years in Nigeria especially in the South-South Region. The Niger Delta region has been plagued by simmering grievances that blossomed over time into a popular insurgency against the Nigerian state and multinational oil companies (MOCs) (Ukiwo 2011).

The activities of the militant groups in the Niger Delta manifested in diverse ways such as militancy, kidnapping, killings, bombing, hostage taking, demolition of oil and gas facilities, pipeline vandalism, illegal oil bunkering with different militant group such as Niger/Delta People Volunteer Force, Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Ogoni Land, and Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta, MEND (Duru, 2012). The militants launched attacks on the Shell Petroleum Development Corporation (SPDC), Chevron and TotalFina Elf (IFE) staff and facilities. MEND killed oil workers at Chevron, TotalFina Elf (IFE), damaged a rescue helicopter sent to rescue employees, killed naval officers, injured soldiers, attacked police stations like the Mini-Okoro Elenlewo and killed some officers on duty, attacked five-star hotels, and carried out a bomb attack on the Eagle Square, Abuja on October 1, 2010 during the fifty year anniversary of independence.

Between 1999 and 2007 a total of 308 hostage incidents were recorded in the region (Ogbonnaya and Ehigiamusoe, 2013). The ONELGA axis of Bayelsa State has

also recorded consistently several cases of bloody clashes among rival cult gangs, kidnappings and killings of security men. In Omoku, headquarters of ONELGA, 14 workers of NESTOIL leaving the town to Port Harcourt were hijacked by ransom-seeking cult gangs (Greenlanders and Deebam) (Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Programme, NSRP, 2016).

Nigeria's military rulers used repression and centralized violence to suppress dissent in oil-producing communities (Eberlein, 2006). The Chief of Army Staff (CAS) Lt. Gen. Tukur Buratai inaugurated a military surveillance and rapid response squad code-named 'Operation Crocodile Smile'.

According to media reports, Lt. Gen. Buratai has said that the operation was meant to boost security in the Niger Delta region but not to cause harm. Since its inauguration, several suspected militant hideouts in the region have been raided and large arrests made but without trials yet (NSRP, 2016). Soldiers of the Operation Crocodile Smile (OCS) raided a cult gangs/kidnappers camp in the Obiozumini community in the Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area (ONELGA) and a violent encounter ensued which led to death of a soldier and two suspected cult gang members (NSRP, 2016).

### **2.3 Secessionists' Agitations in the South-East Region**

Different scholars' view points on this quest for secession by this region centre on the desire for resources control, political independence, elite brinkmanship, inequality and political maneuvering by the major ethnic groups within their immediate association. The challenge of Biafra (1967-70) marked the zenith of post-independence political brinkmanship in Nigeria. The horrifying passion that attended its thirty months of existence has today made the name 'Biafra' an anathema in the Nigerian geopolitical lexicon.

Yet similar movements since 1999 (Independent People of Biafra, IPOB, and Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB)– albeit of lesser consequence – had come after the Biafran agitation with higher consequences from the Nigerian Military. The movements relied on the United Nations Charter under the Declaration of Indigenous peoples which empowers every citizen to agitate for the separation of his or her region from a recognized or sovereign nation that it belongs (Udochukwu, 2017).

MASSOB emerged as a group that support the principles of "*pacifism and non-violence*", its objectives which include the actualization of a sovereign state of Biafra saw it often clashing with Nigerian state institutions like the police and the military (Onuoha, 2014). The splinter group of MASSOB, IPOB founded in 2014 by Mazi Nnamdi Kanu, moved away from the mother's goal to be more violent in their approach on Biafra secessionism which results into different violent clashes between the Nigeria security agencies and the Biafra Militant.

According to Chime-Nganya, Ezeji and Ezegwu (2017), the clashes between IPOB members and the Nigerian security officials have led to several injuries in Abia and

other South-Eastern states, with a police station burnt in Aba, while in one of such protests of 30th to 31st May 2016, more than 5 personnel of the Nigeria police were killed, while several soldiers were wounded, Nigeria police vehicles were burnt down, while several others of the Nigeria Army were vandalized. The movements have had visible impacts on Nigeria's democratic experience, and by extension, the political system. The Nigerian state responded with several measures, including the deployment of military troops in what is known as "Operation Python Dance II" (or Egwu Eke II) as part of measures to cope with the movement's activities (Adigun, 2018).

According to Chime-Nganya, Ezeji and Ezegwu (2017), September 14, 2017 when troops on military exercise, Operation Python Dance II allegedly invaded his *Afaraukwu, Ibeku* Umuahia country home, prompting a clash between the soldiers and IPOB members. Hence, on Friday, September 15, 2017, the Nigeria military declared IPOB a "militant terrorist organization". The reason given by the Nigeria Military Headquarter for the proclamation of IPOB as a terrorist organization cited IPOB's perpetration of acts, include the formation of Biafra Secret Service (BSS), advanced stages in the formation of Biafra National Guard (BNG), militants possession/use of weapons, physical confrontations and attempt to snatch military weapons from the military troops on patrol, un authorized blockage of public access roads and extortion of money from hapless members of the general public according to them, these act built an unfathomable tension in the South-East and Nigeria (Chime-Nganya, Ezeji and Ezegwu, 2017).

While announcing the exercise at a press conference, the Army Chief of Training and Operations, Major-General David Ahmadu, said, "*Exercise Ogbu (sic) eke II has become more expedient due to spate of assassinations, even in religious places, attacks on security personnel and theft of weapons, kidnapping, armed banditry, violent agitations by secessionist groups, among other crimes that have recently bedeviled the region*" (Ekwueme and Ugwuanyi, 2018).

#### **2.4 Herder-Farmers' Conflict in the Middle-Belt**

The quest for resources to feed their cattle and inquisitive for the nature of man to protect their belonging including land and all other resources on it, raises its ugly head as a crisis between the herdsman and farmers in Nigeria. While the competition between these two agricultural land user-groups tends to be compromise in exchange of cows, vegetable, grass and kolanut, however, often times it also tends to be conflictual as it turned into serious overt and covert manifestation of hostilities and social friction in many parts of Nigeria (Nyong and Fiki, 2005; Adisa, 2012). The conflicts have demonstrated high potential to exacerbate the insecurity and food crisis particularly in rural communities where most of the conflicts are localized, with reverberating consequences nationwide (Adisa, 2012).

Herdsman attacks in the recent years have taken more sophisticated dimensions with the use of new types of weapons and communication devices. In consequence, the sedentary agrarian communities have resorted to self-defense through local vigilante

groups (McGregor 2014). This has further aggravated violence, with destruction of lives and properties. Fasona and Omojola (2005) noted that herders/farmers' conflict accounted for 35% of all reported crises between 1991 and 2005 in Nigeria. Corroborating this, the statistics of deaths recorded in 2014 in Nigeria is 1229 caused by Fulani herdsmen as comparable to 80 people killed in 2013 (Burton, 2016). However, going by the recent statistics, cattle grazing conflicts have actually accounted for 55% of all reported crime against persons in Nigeria (National Bureau of Statistics, NBS, 2017).

While several related studies have attributed the menace of the herdsmen to lapses in the security agencies to bring the situation under control (Achumba, Ighomere and Akpor-Robaro, 2013; Olugbenga, 2013; Olayoku, 2014; Okwor, 2016); other related studies have attributed to youth restiveness and communities intolerance of the aliens (Obi, 2015); war in climate change (Akinyemi and Olaniyan, 2017); migration, exclusion and expulsion of the nomadic farmers in the community (Olayoku, 2014, Olaniyan et al, 2016); expansion in the uses of land (Adisa, 2012); and launched reprisal attacks on the herders, sacking their settlements and destroying their property as the factors that promoted conflicts among the herders and farmers.

Scholars have also argued that the Grazing Law of 1965 (NRL Gazette No 4) enacted by the Northern Region was not only a hindrance but that the Land Use Decree of 1978 (Supplement to Official Gazette Extraordinary Number 14) has further distanced the nomad from settlement and grazing areas. In his attempt to survive, his movement of cattle into private farms has provoked communal clashes (Amadi, 2015, Olugbenga, 2016). In today, several other heinous crimes have been carried out by Fulani herdsmen in Nigeria which include the following: On February 18, 2016, 5 people were killed in Okokolo village in Agatu Local Government Area of Benue state by suspected Fulani herdsmen.

Similarly, 500 people were killed in a simultaneous attacks carried out in 9 communities – Aila, Akwu, Adagbo, Okokolo, Ugboju, Odugbeho, Ogbaulu, Egba and Obagaji in Agatu Local Government Area of Benue state on March 5, 2016 by this dreadful Fulani herdsmen (Vanguard, March 6, 2016). 15 persons were killed in two communities in Gashaka Local Government Area of Taraba State on April 12, 2016. On April 19, 2016 the entire Local Government Areas of Delta state brought economic activities of the state to a halt while protesting against the killing of 23 persons in the state by Fulani herdsmen. 59 persons were killed in Ugondo, Turan and Gabo Nenzev communities in Logo Local Government Area by Fulani herdsmen on June 20, 2016 (Agbedo, 2016).

Buari (2017) also reported several attacks perpetrated by the Fulani herdsmen in Taraba State. He reported that, the Fulani herdsmen imported about 500 others from Nasarawa state to help launch the attack on the community causing death of more than 15 people and many sustained injuries. Reacting to the development, stakeholders from the local government held a meeting where they tried to find solutions to the increased attacks by herdsmen on communities. Preceding this time, Vanguard newspaper reported in December 10, 2017 that, some aged women were attacked and machete in

between Moro and Egelu Villages for the refusal to submit themselves to be raped by the herdsmen (Vanguard Newspaper, 10 December, 2017). Even six months after the attacks reported by Buari and Vanguard newspaper, several attacks, maiming and killings have carried out in Taraba State and its environs without any prior counter-attacks from the federal Government.

The terrorist atrocities were also committed in Kogi State, as the suspected Fulani herdsmen killed traditional ruler, the Onu Agbenema, Musa Edibo, and his wife and burnt several houses in separate attacks on Agbenema town, Aj'Ichekpa, Opada and Iyade villages on 19 March, 2018 (Odogun, 2018). Dimelu, Salifu, Enwelu and Igbokwe (2017) have recorded similar attack carried out in Kogi that hundreds of lives lost in Kogi State in 2017.

The government responses include the enactment of the "Open Grazing Prohibition and Ranches Establishment Law" by Ekiti, Benue and Taraba States respectively; and the controversial cattle colony initiative proposed by the Federal Government were intended to regulate the activities of farmers and herders to ensure peaceful social cohesion. However, the implementation of law and prohibitions seemingly generated controversies and heightened tensions across affected States. This was also manifested in the attack of Kogi State amid its Government's open invitation to herdsmen to relocate to the State and the approval of 15,000 hectares of land in support of the Federal Government's quest for the cattle colony scheme (News Quick Updates, 2018).

The Federal and State Government devise strategy in combating the farmers-Herdsmen violence through deployment of Military Operation called "Ayem Akpatuma-Cat Race" in Benue, Taraba, Nassarawa, Kaduna, Niger and Kogi States and intensified security patrol to affected communities to prevent reprisals as well as forestall further break down of law and order (News Quick Updates, 2018).

## **2.5 Kidnapping and Ritual Killings in the South-West Region**

In southwestern Nigeria, ritual killings, murders, kidnappings, armed robberies and other social vices have become features of the region in the recent time. Several newspapers reports of these have dominated the recent scholarly reports and writings. Toluwani (2018) reports that at the Kidnapper's den Soka forest at Oluyole Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria, were corpses, malnourished victims who were about to be slaughtered for ritual purposes, mutilated hands and legs as well as human skulls, clothes, and shoes of the dead victims. According to Toluwani (2018), more than 30 malnourished people were rescued alive when the kidnapping den was unveiled in March 22, 2014.

Also discovered in the den were women's bags and shoes, identity cards, including those of some students of private university, Lead City University, Ibadan and other personal items which belonged to victims of ritualists. In Lagos State, Nigeria, "Badoo Killings" is one of the most criminal activities that dominated news headlines in 2017-2018 especially in Ikorodu area of the state. According to the findings, Badoo members operations carried no guns or machetes, their weapons are primarily stones

and mortal, clubs and pestle. They carried out their operation by sneaking into targets; homes at night and smash their heads with grinding stones or mortars, then collect their blood with handkerchiefs which were sold for ritual purposes (Adekunle, 2017).

Reported also, were cases of several kidnapping activities in Lagos, Ekiti, Ondo State and Osun State. Nigeria Tribune newspaper, Nov 20, 2018 reported the suspected kidnapping of a Lawyer and eight other people in along Iwaraja-Efon Alaye Ekiti, Ekiti State. In similar perspective, Chief Donatus Dunu, one of the victims of alleged billionaire kidnapper, Chukwudubem Onwuamadike better known as Evans also narrated his experience before Ikeja High Court on how he escaped from the kidnappers' den (This Day Newspaper, March 17, 2018). The latest ritual activities moved away from stealing of human beings to the stealing of human materials like women's bras, pants, baby's diapers, men's underwear's and boxers. Reports had it that a man was caught on Thursday, 4 January, 2019 in Akure, Ondo State with a bag containing women's underwear and sanitary pads. According to the reports, ritualist often send out boys and girls who help get the panties and female agents are also used to collect male under-wears from men after sex (Chioma, 2019).

### **3. Philosophy, Operation Procedures and Execution of Military Operations in Nigeria**

Essentially, the rising wave of insecurities in Nigeria has overwhelmed the internal security capacity of the police and has consequently increased the involvement of the military in internal security operations. Supporting this claim, study by Adetoye and osunrayi (2016) shed light to the challenges of the security agencies in combating Jos North Crisis (and other recent security challenges) which include inadequate numerical strength of the personnel, ineffective deployment of the security agents when the needs arise, emotional and sentimental attachment of the security agencies and government officials in the ethno-religious crises as well as lack of intelligent gathering by the security agency especially Nigerian Police and Department of State Service in fosterling peace in the warring communities.

The above systematic challenges of the NPF to effectively implement internal security policy of Nigeria are further exacerbated by poor institutional capacity of the institution in terms of manpower and logistics. Thus, available statistics shows that the staff strength of the Nigerian Police Force as at 2011 was estimated at 371, 000. Thus, this figure is grossly low considering Nigeria's national population which is about 164,000 as at 2011. Consequently, the Nigeria military presence in conflicts in Nigeria was based on inadequacies in internal security apparatuses.

Therefore, the involvement of the Nigerian Military in internal security operations is justified and highlighted under Section 217, Subsections 1 and 2 of the 1999 Constitution (as amended). Subsection 2 for instance stipulates that:

*“The Federation shall, subject to an Act of the National Assembly made in that behalf, equip and maintain the armed forces as may be considered adequate and effective for the*

*purpose of: (a) defending Nigeria from external aggression; (b) maintaining its territorial integrity and securing its borders from violation on land, sea, or air; (c) 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 the National Assembly; and (d) performance such other functions as may be prescribed by an Act of the National Assembly.” (1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria).*

Besides the provision of the 1999 Constitution, Section 8(1) of the Armed Forces Act states that “the President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces shall determine the operational use of the Armed Forces”. Articulating the Operation use of the military and justifying the use of the military in internal security operations in Nigeria, Okoli and Orinya (2013:21) posited that:

*“In this section (8:1), “operational use of the armed forces” includes the operational use of the armed forces in Nigeria for the purpose of maintaining and securing public safety and public order”. The security challenges witnessed in the country have called for more of military intervention in the form of internal security operations and it has been observed that the military is increasingly involved in internal security operations”.*

It must be further noted that Nigerian Military constitutes Nigerian Army, Navy and Air force, whose primary assignment (constitutionally determined), is to protect the state from external aggression and internal insurrection, while maintaining peace and order. It is from these perspectives that this paper argues in support of the roles so far played by the military. It however frowns at its various excesses which have taken the forms of extra-judicial killings and human right abuses.

#### **4. Pros and Cons of Military Operations**

Although the various military operations have been yielding the desired outcomes, they have equally evoked tensions and skepticism in different quarters. During the period of Operation Python Dance II, the Abia state Governor, Dr. Okezie Ikpeazu, declared curfew as parts of efforts to reduce the rising casualties resulting from violent clashes between the military and IPOB activities. This dangerous twist led to the killing and disappearance of several activists (Adigun, 2018). Ekwueme and Uguwanyi (2018) reported that the military invasion of the home of Nnamdi Kanu led to killing of over four people with many people missing.

The military repression led to forceful shooting at the sight without minding the civil right of the citizens and the militants. In 2016, during an event organized by IPOB in Onitsha, Anambra state, the Nigerian army, according to Amnesty International, “gunned down unarmed people” (Amnesty International, 2016b). On 15 March 2016,

Nigerian police arrested and secretly killing 20 MASSOB members with Biafran/MASSOB plate numbers (Nwaiwu, 2016). According to Amnesty International as cited by Adigun, (2018), the Nigerian security agencies have killed “at least 150 members and supporters of the pro-Biafran organization IPOB members and injured hundreds during non-violent meetings, marches and other gatherings. Hundreds of IPOB members were also arbitrarily arrested by security agencies between August 2015 and 2016.

Also, during the carnage at Nnamdi Kanu’s house in the heat of Operation Python Dance II, IPOB alleged that security agencies “looted Nnamdi Kanu’s family house at Afaraukwu, Umuahia in Abia State” (Chiedozie, 2017b).

Another dramatic effect that accompanied the military operations on the South-East region was the alleged invasion of the NUJ House in Umuahia, Abia State on September 11, 2017. Reports by the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) and reported by major Nigerian newspapers like *Vanguard* and *Punch* of Setemver 12 revealed army personnels numbering about 50 invaded the NUJ office in Umuahia, Abia state where journalist were harassed and intimidated. Besides the intimidation, some office gadgets such as phones, iPads, tablets and other official documents were destroyed. The incident reportedly occurred during ‘show of force’ in line with Operation Python Dance 11.

One of the obvious aftermath of the growing tension occasioned by the military operation in Nigeria is the mistrust such operations have caused in the polity. It must be noted that the purported vaccination planned by the Nigerian Military as it parts of its corporate social responsibility elicited great tension across the South-East and South-South regions. The *Punch* on October 12 reported that schools were deserted and various communities across the two regions were thrown into disarray. Again, according to NRS (2016), military operation in Niger Delta otherwise called Operation Crocodile Smile, observed that the military's shows of power and intimidation have sent panic and suspense everywhere such that there has been a decline in economic activities in the waterways. This reportedly caused food shortage, transportation crisis and other social challenges. Therefore, while this operation is perceived as achieving its goals with the incidents of destruction of oil installations in the region reduced since its inception, it remains unclear if the reduction in violence is related directly the efforts of the Operation. Regardless, incidents of violence still pose challenges to economic and social life for those not suspected or involved in criminal activities.

The effects of the internalization of the roles of the military was more grave as an air strike by the military on an Internally Displaced People’s (IDP) camp in Rann, Borno state reportedly killed 52 persons that included aide workers. The incidence occurred on January 17, 2017 at about 9 am (*Vanguard*, 17 January, 2017).

## 5. Conclusion

The rising trends of insecurity in Nigeria are largely reflected in the increasing incidents of armed robbery, kidnapping, human trafficking, assassinations, terrorism, militancy and ritual killings in different parts of the country as discussed in this study. While this study analyses the involvement of the military in the internal insecurities of the Nigerian state, it concludes that there is the need for limited roles in the internalization of the military in Nigeria in order for the political class to have effective monitoring and control over the military; and prevent its intervention in the politics of the country.

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