

---

## CHALLENGES MILITATING AGAINST EFFECTIVE ARMED FORCES IN JOINT OPERATIONS IN NIGERIA

**Rotimi Olajide Opeyeoluwa<sup>1</sup>**

Department of International Relations and Diplomacy,  
Afe Babalola University Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State<sup>1</sup>

**Mahmud Dauda<sup>2</sup>**

Department of Military History, Nigerian Defence Academy Kaduna<sup>2</sup>

---

### Abstract

*Nigeria seems to be faced with myriad insecurity threats or challenges resulting to the establishment of military exercises and combat operations to tackle such menace. Such operations which are known as Joint Operations are carried out by the Armed Forces who are diligently and gallantly being prosecuted for specific purposes and assignments to resolve different security concerns. The aim of this study is to factor out and examine the major challenges militating against the effectiveness of the Armed Forces in Joint Operations in Nigeria. However, the extant literature on the subject matter seems to be unavailable as other literature are more of discourse on internal security operations. For a symbolic understanding of the study, specific concepts were clarified. The study also examined the emergence of the Armed Forces tracing it to the colonial epoch. Having use diligent varieties of secondary sources as methodology of the research, the study finds out that despite the heavy presence of the military and its joint operations, obstacles like lack of manpower and understaffing, logistic constrain, corruption, training mode, strategy and tactics among others form the bases of their setbacks and their capacity to curtail the persistent conflicts to be threatened or questioned. The study further reveals the need for the Nigerian state to review such challenges beguiling joint operations for not just achieving of peace but for strategic economic development of a contributing functional and serviceable Armed Forces of standard specifications.*

**Keywords:** Armed Forces, Security, Joint Operations, Joint Task Force, Operational Challenges, Strategy and tactics.

---

### Introduction

Over the years, especially in the past decade, Nigeria seems to have been confronted with more security challenges that continues to threaten the corporate existence of the country in a manner that calls for deep introspection and a need for a re-think. The country has also been faced with lack of adequate manpower in its security agencies, especially the Nigerian Police, as such, there is a need for collaboration and synergy among the security actors to confront this recurring security challenges. In a bid to ensure that insecurity is addressed squarely, the Federal Government is constrained to command its military to confront the security challenges. Military exercises and combat operations against terrorists, insurgents (such as Boko Haram and the Islamic State of West African Province, ISWAP), and armed bandits, among other criminals that have been launched attacks in Nigeria. The Armed Forces of Nigerian (AFN) are the combined military

forces of Nigeria which consists of three uniformed service branches: the Nigerian Army, Nigerian Navy, and Nigerian Air Force. Across the entire geo-political zones, the troops of the Nigerian Armed Forces are currently and gallantly prosecuting diverse operations through several Joint Task Forces (JTFs) or Joint Operations which are usually set up for specific purposes and assignments to resolve different security concerns. For example, the JTF in the Niger Delta is set up to checkmate militancy in the region, the Special Task Force (STF) in Plateau State is set up to curb ethno-religious conflicts in the state and some parts of Bauchi and Kaduna States and the Joint Task Force in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa is to curtail insurgency. Other operations include Delta Safe, Hadarin Daji, Awatse, Whirl Punch,

Hadin Kai, and Swift Response among others.<sup>1</sup> Such joint operations are usually set up based on the principle of inter-agency collaboration, meaning that all the security groups would formally work together to attain specific integrated mandates.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, the heavy presence of the military (Armed Forces) and its joint operations have remained unwavering in decimating the ranks of terrorists, bandits, kidnappers and other violent non-state actors, but not without some setbacks which has impacted adversely in their capacity to curtail the persistent conflicts. This development seems to threaten or question the capacity of the Armed Forces as they continue to lose logistics, manpower (officers and troops), equipment and invariable the needed resolve to confront the military operations with mounting distractions from the populace.

This paper aim to expand and deepen the knowledge and understanding of some of the major challenges militating against the effectiveness of the Armed Forces in joint operations in Nigeria. This is intended to be achieved through clarifying some key terms meaningful to the subject matter, taking into account a brief overview of the armed forces background, examining the major challenges militating against the effectiveness of the armed forces in joint operations in the country as witnessed in recent joint military operations.

### Conceptual Clarification

For a meaningful comprehension of the subject matter, important concepts related to the study will be clarified.

**Security**—Security matters and entails self-preservation which is the first law of existence, it is an encompassing phenomenon that is paramount to every aspect of life. 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. Matter of fact, it is impossible to fathom a world without security. In addition, Security in the Nigerian Grand Strategy for National 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<sup>3</sup>. 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.<sup>4</sup> Security in the context of this study was used in respect to the Armed Forces as an enforcement agency responsible for the protections of the territorial integrity of the nation and maintenance of order in the society.

**Armed Forces** – According to the Nigeria’s Military Manual in general, the armed forces of a state and of a party to a conflict consist of all organized units and personnel which are under a command responsible for the behavior of its subordinates and each state and belligerent party must determine the categories of persons and objects belonging to its armed forces ... Furthermore, the armed forces shall be subject to an internal disciplinary system in order to uphold and enforce the law of war.<sup>5</sup>

**Nigerian Armed Forces**—The Nigerian Armed Forces are the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria whose active-duty military personnel in the three-armed services (Army, Navy and Airforce) total approximately 200,000 troops and 300,000 paramilitary personnel.<sup>6</sup> These personnel roles are legally backed by and entrenched in the country’s Constitution. However, the role of such forces is the defence of the territorial integrity and

<sup>1</sup> A. Mahmud, “Reviewing Military Operations as Panacea for Insecurity”, PRNigeria, 22 November, 2022, <https://prnigeria.com/2022/11/26/reviewing-military-operations-2/#>, 21/04/23.

<sup>2</sup> Mathias Daji Yake “Military Joint Task Force and the Challenges of Internal Security Operations in Nigeria: The Plateau State Experience”, (July 2019). Retrieved from: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/328586038>. Accessed 22/04/23.

Saleh, Bala and Ouedraogo Emile (2018), <sup>3</sup> “National Security Strategy Development, Africa Center for Strategic Studies, [2019-04-NSSD-Case-Study-Nigeria-EN.pdf](https://africacenter.org/2019-04-NSSD-Case-Study-Nigeria-EN.pdf) ([africacenter.org](https://africacenter.org))

Sambo, Dasuki, “Nigeria’s Security Challenges: 4 Way Forward”. Text of Speech delivered at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Seminar held at the National Defence College, Abuja by the Alumni of the Institution.

<sup>5</sup> “Nigeria”, International Humanitarian Law (IHL), Directorate of Legal Services, Nigerian Army, (1994), 38, §4. <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/ar/customary-ihl/v2/rule4>, accessed 21/04/23.

<sup>6</sup> International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), *Military Balance*, (Routledge, 2007), 286.

other core interests of the nation form as addressed in the Section 217 of the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria.<sup>7</sup>

**Joint Operation-** According to a US publication on Joint Operations, joint forces are composed of key different departments under a commander (who is responsible for joint force). The commander of the joint forces or formation may create other units or heads to command other operations under it at specific places and jurisdictions or areas of responsibilities, while receiving orders from its established authority that is headed by the commander.<sup>8</sup>

A joint operation is also a joint arrangement whereby the parties that have joint control of the arrangement have rights to the assets, and obligations for the liabilities, relating to the arrangement. Those parties are called joint operators.<sup>9</sup> Joint Operations in military term is a military strategy employing combined arms to accomplish a specified objective.

**Internal Security Operations (ISO's)** – According to Maikomo and Ngomba, ISO's is defined as any designed activities to contain internal threats as an effort to preserve law and order in a state, and are executed by internal security agents e.g. the police force, immigration service, customs service, Department of state security service and other domestic security apparatus.<sup>10</sup> It is also defined as the operation that is designed to handle internal/domestic conflicts. However, the level of insecurity or conflicts such as communal/ethnic clashes, religious conflicts, recent acts of terrorism, insurgency and banditry in Nigeria precipitated the involvement of the military (armed forces) in ISOPs.

#### **Role of the Armed Forces (Constitutional Mandate)**

Every government is administered by the laws of its peculiar constitution. Generally, the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria which provides for the

Armed Forces (military) in its section 217 as it makes it clear that the duties of the Armed Forces (military), that is the Army, Navy and Air force will be to defend Nigeria from external aggression, maintain its territorial integrity and securing its borders from isolation on land, sea or air, suppressing insurrection and acting in aid of civil authorities to restore order when called upon to do so by the President but subject to such conditions as may be prescribed by an Act of National Assembly. The military is also to perform such other functions as may be prescribed by an Act of the National Assembly.<sup>11</sup>

However, the prime functions of the armed forces (military) are to protect the nation against external aggression or threats, occasionally they may be required to assist the civil authorities to deal with internal violence and suppress internal tension. For instance, according to Idowu and Aregbesola, the military may be required to assist the police in restoring law and order in any part of the country as seen and justify in the present condition in the North-East.<sup>12</sup> Thus, Section 217© of the 1999 Constitution therefore, forms the basis of the involvement of the armed forces (military) in Internal Security Operations (ISOPs) in Nigeria.

#### **An Overview of Joint Operations in Nigeria in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

Nigeria has continued to grapple with complex security challenges made more intractable since the return of democracy in 1999. As a matter of fact, it appears as though the return of democracy and the withdrawal of military to the barracks has unleashed the Pandora box. These grave security situation includes, banditry, kidnapping, communal crisis, insurgency/terrorism, communal crisis, vandalism and religious conflicts. These multiple security challenges have made the country vulnerable in diverse manner that its

<sup>7</sup> Section 217 of the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria.

<sup>8</sup> Joint Publication. Joint Task Force Headquarters. 29 November, 2012.

[http://www.defenseinnovationmarketplace.mil/resources/Joint\\_Doctrine\\_JTF\\_headquarters.pdf](http://www.defenseinnovationmarketplace.mil/resources/Joint_Doctrine_JTF_headquarters.pdf), accessed 25/04/23.

<sup>9</sup> IFRS 11 — Joint Arrangements – IAS Plus, <https://www.iasplus.com/en/standards/ifrs/ifrs11%203:~:text=3DA%2520joint%2520operation%2520is%2520a,parties%2520are%2520called%2520joint%2520operators.&ved=>, accessed 21/04/23.

J.M. Maikomo and J. Ngomba, "Military <sup>10</sup> Security Issues (MSI) and the Challenge of Internal Security Operations (ISOPs) in Nigeria", *Journal of International Affairs and Global Strategy*, Vol.62, (2018), 13.

<sup>11</sup> Section 217 (2) (a) and (d) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

<sup>12</sup> J. Idowu and M. O. Aregbesola, "Internal Security Operations and Human Rights Abuses in Nigeria: Issues and Challenges", Conference paper, September 2013, 12 (doc.)

frontiers are breached by terrorists launching attacks at intervals.

These security challenge has provided a compelling need for the Nigerian security institutions especially the military (Armed Forces) to be deployed to tackle the criminals. Some of the joint operations in Internal Security Operations (ISOPs) spearheaded by the military include: operation 'Lafiya Dole', operation 'Crack down', Operation 'Gama Aiki', operation 'Safe Corridor', Operation 'Deep Punch I' Operation 'Deep Punch II', etc. These are all geared towards tackling the menace of Boko Haram insurgency in the North eastern region of Nigeria. While operation 'Pulo Shield', operation 'Delta Safe', operation 'Crocodile Smile', operation 'Tsera Teku', are to checkmate illegal activities of Niger-Delta militants with the aim of protecting critical economic and national infrastructures within the Niger-Delta.<sup>13</sup>

According to Maikomo and Ngomba, other operations include: Operation 'Safe Haven', operation 'Sharan Daji', operation 'Harbin Kunama', operation 'Awase', operation 'Iron Fence', operation 'Mesa', operation 'Safe Conducts', operation 'Quick Response Squad', operation 'Python dance I', operation 'Python dance II', operation 'Ayem Akpatuma', operation 'Karamin Goro', and few others are designed to squash the menace of violent criminal activities, electoral violence, herder/farmer crisis, and other anti-state activities.<sup>14</sup>

Looking at the above timeline, it is visible to say that the 21<sup>st</sup> century security issues are indeed a tough one for the Armed Forces as those operations has spread across the existing six geo-political regions of the country. Also, joint operations in the century seem to be more organized and precise in mandate as reflected in their code names compared to the previous century operations.

### **Challenges Face by the Armed Forces in Joint Operations in Nigeria**

Like any human initiative, military operations are not without some challenges, thus the

justification for this paper. The entanglement of the armed forces (military) in joint operations acquaints the need for the military to adjust to the demands of internal security operations as adjudged in the international arena. The armed forces often encounter challenges/obstacles adjusting in joint operations when dealing with security threats. Highlighted below are some of the areas of the major problems which the Nigerian armed forces are grappling with in the aftermath of such deployments:

#### ***Lack of Manpower and Underfunding***

The Nigerian military is currently involved in multiple internal security operations across the country. The military is battling the Boko Haram insurgents in the North-east, armed bandits in the North-west and North-central, as well as militants and pirates in the South-south.<sup>15</sup> The immediate past Nigerian Chief of Defence Staff, General Lucky Irabor, once lamented that deploying troops across the 36 states of the federation is a drain on the military. He made this statement during the inauguration of the maiden Joint Operations Planning Exercise (JOPEX), codenamed Exercise Sky Lock" for participants of the Army, Navy and Air Force War Colleges. He said, "To this end, the product of this joint operations planning exercise will form part of the military decision-making cycle for some ongoing and future operations. This further underscores the significance of this science and the resources committed to each actualization"<sup>16</sup>.

There has been indication of underfunding of many internal security operations in Nigeria is another issue rearing its head occasioned by the deployment of such military initiative. The meagre salary paid to soldiers in most cases end up leaving them in debt as their monthly salary cannot sustain the rising cost of food and services, and the growing large family. This shortage as a result of the massive deployment has proven to be a clog in the wheel of excellence expected of such military deployment, hence calls for incentives to boost the morale of the combatant.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Maikomo and Ngomba, "Military Security Issues (MSI) and the Challenge of Internal Security Operations (ISOPs) in Nigeria", 16.

<sup>14</sup> Maikomo and J. Ngomba, 16.

<sup>15</sup> Military Joint Task Force and the Challenges of Internal Security Operations in Nigeria: The Plateau State Experience"

Irabor, L. "Military Operations in 36 States <sup>16</sup> Draining Resources" [www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2021/11/02/Accessed: 22-09-2023](http://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2021/11/02/Accessed: 22-09-2023).

<sup>17</sup> Maikomo and Ngomba, "Military Security Issues (MSI) and the Challenge of Internal Security Operations (ISOPs) in Nigeria", 16.

Given the massive deployment across the country, it has created massive manpower challenge. Even though many observers have raised concerns that a lot of the task the military is involved in should be the work of the Nigerian Police but for the inadequacies of the Nigeria Police and the increasingly complexity of the security challenges which the country is faced with. Despite drafting the military to solve most of these security challenges, however, the insecurity across the country appears to worsen and hundreds of people are killed or kidnapped weekly across Nigeria. For instance, Babagana Zulum, Governor of Borno State, has expressed concern over the lack of manpower, equipment and technology by the Nigerian Government to fight Boko Haram terrorists. He expressed his worries on when he hosted members of the House of Representatives committee on Defence in the State and he said:<sup>18</sup>

...I have always admitted that the Federal Government has done well under the watch of President Muhammadu Buhari. At a time, about 20 local government areas were displaced but after May 29, 2015, almost all the roads were opened and the local government retrieved. But notwithstanding the gains that we had, between March 2019 till date, we have experienced horrific and simultaneous attacks throughout the state. I therefore, plead with Mr. President and as well as the Nigerian military to revisit the strategy used during 2016/2017 that we were almost celebrating the demise of Boko Haram so that we can deal with the insurgents once and for all. Take my words, the military doesn't have the manpower; they don't have the

equipment, they don't have the technology...<sup>19</sup>

There has been accusation that the Federal Government provides insufficient money to the combatant even though huge amount of money were directed in the budget but not being released to the combatant as at when due. The Minister of Defence, Bashir Magashi, who briefed journalists after Wednesday's Federal Executive Council (FEC) meeting, said he made a presentation at the meeting on the security challenges facing Nigeria who said:<sup>20</sup>

We spoke about our shortcomings. We talked about manpower shortage, inadequate funding for the Ministry of Defence. We talked about all the operations we have been conducting, the successes and failures of each of the operations right from Operation Lafia Dole to Operation Tawase. The shortcomings of each of the operations were discussed and God so kind contributions were made by members of the council and I think in no distant time there will be a change in the conduct of our affairs in the Ministry of Defence.<sup>21</sup>

Despite Mr. Magashi's claim of low funding for the military, the defence sector has for the past five years taken a large chunk of Nigeria's budget, often larger than education and health. For example, in 2020 budget, about N878 billion of the 10.59 trillion (about 8 per cent) was allocated to defence. However, several officials, including former Army Chief Tukur Buratai, have repeatedly complained that money is often not released for items and projects approved in the budget. Similarly, when he lamented while appearing before the Senate Committee on Army matters that poor funding of military operations being carried out virtually in all the states of the federation has

<sup>18</sup> Sahara reporters "Nigerian Military Does Not Have Manpower, Technology to Defeat Boko Haram" Sahara Reporters, New York, 20 February 2020, Retrieved from <https://www.sahara.reporters.com>, accessed 20/04/23

Sahara reporters "Nigerian Military Does Not Have Manpower, Technology To Defeat Boko Haram"

<sup>20</sup> Insecurity Nigerian Military Short of Manpower Adequate Funding: Defence Minister", retrieved from <https://www.premiumtimesng.com>, accessed 20/04/23.

<sup>21</sup> Insecurity Nigerian Military Short of Manpower Adequate Funding: Defence Minister"

not only negatively affected the success of the on-going operations but has extended the military's core constitutional roles and have impacted significantly on the Army's human and material resources.<sup>22</sup>

### **Poor Equipment and Logistics (Modern Technology)**

One of the re-occurring challenges in most joint operations especially in Niger-delta and North-east regions is the lack of sufficient, effective and efficient modern equipment and logistics. In many cases military personal is out run or ambushed by militants or insurgents during such operations. This brings the need for a reliable and efficient communication support to meet today's requirement of effective joint military operations.<sup>23</sup>

Logistics support is no doubt vital to the success of military operations which prompted the Nigerian Army to express its readiness to promote joint planning and operations among the services in addressing the nation's prevailing security challenges. Challenges of logistics had serious impact on not just joint operations but the ongoing military campaign against insurgency in the North-east and banditry in the North-west, among other operations. This is because logistics are the life blood of military power in every war and armed confrontation. Best said logistics concerned the military needs and supply chain to the battlefield and to the war objectives which drove and sustained the troops. Logistics is an important and critical part of any military operation because the size of logistics impacts greatly on the course of war. The military must be able to move troops in and out of the battle fronts, give food to the troops as well as medical services and funds for troops welfare. However, the Nigerian joint troops are encountering such problems especially communication problems which resulted to their ambushes in many occasions.<sup>24</sup>

### **The Prevalence of Corruption**

Corruption and other sharp practices in the military system is reveal in some unfortunate cases where wounded soldiers are left to treat and fend for themselves despite the availability of funds budgeted for such situations as corruption and criminal negligence denied many foot soldiers their operation allowance as when due. On the operational front, military personnel do complain of poor food quality despite high money drafted to cover their feeding. A good example is the Operation 'Lafiya Dole' where soldiers complained about the quality of food been served to them despite the huge amount of money appropriated for that purpose every year. Many soldiers in such operations chose to suffer in silence as they are afraid of the consequences of speaking out. The Nigerian military especially in the fight against insurgency in the north-eastern part of the country as many units were over-run by the insurgents in multiple cases. Although corruption has existed in human society for quite a long time, but the incidence of corruption among security personnel in Nigeria poses great challenges to governance and has become an issue of public concern; corruption has impacted negatively on the operational development in Nigeria; despite various policies and programs adopted by previous Army Chiefs.<sup>25</sup>

### **Deficient Training Process**

Military training which is usually based on inflicting maximum damage and destruction on their opponents and compelling defeating any opponent in the shortest possible time within the rules and the law of armed conflict is in line with their primary function which includes the defence of the territorial integrity and internal security. Meanwhile, joint operations in internal security operations require a measure of restraint and the use of minimum force. The requirement for minimum force is because they are now maintaining law and order among their own people in their own country.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Insecurity Nigerian Military Short of Manpower Adequate Funding: Defence Minister"

<sup>23</sup> Maikomo and Ngomba, "Military Security Issues (MSI) and the Challenge of Internal Security Operations (ISOPs) in Nigeria", 17

<sup>24</sup> Kingsley Nwezeh "Imperative of Logistics: Lessons from the Nigerian Civil War for Operational Leaders" Army War College of Nigeria, 2021.

<sup>25</sup> Maikomo and Ngomba "Military Security Issues (MSI) and the Challenge of Internal Security Operations (ISOPs) in Nigeria", 17.

<sup>26</sup> Idowu and Aregbesola, "Internal Security Operations and Human Rights Abuses in Nigeria: Issues and Challenges", 12. See also THE LAW OF ARMED CONFLICT, *Internal Security Operations – Part A*, (International Committee of the Red Cross Unit for Relations with Armed and Security Forces 2002), 9-10.

In other words, the deployment of military personnel with such aforementioned training background into joint operations in Internal Security Operations (ISOPs) is no doubt a sharp contrast to what is required in the military operational modus, and is like putting a square peg in a round hole which will not fit in properly. This explains the degree of mishandling of civilians in the traditional thinking of military trainings. Therefore, it is expected that joint operations in ISOPs training should be part of recruitment process or a particular wing should be channeled for joint operational specialization.<sup>27</sup> This fact was also acknowledged by the former Chief of Army Staff, Lt. Gen. Onyeabo Ihejirika, who said that the Nigerian Army must refocus its logistics training to cater for internal security operations in aid of civil authority.<sup>28</sup>

#### **Mandate and Orientation**

The mandate challenge here is owing to the fact that some of the mandates are unrealistic, vague and unclear even to the military personnel carrying such operations, this explains many contradictions encountered during a number of operations leading to changing or replacing certain operations.<sup>29</sup>

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

Another issue is the perceived attitude of the armed forces when called upon to perform joint operations as an internal security measure. Some soldiers are of the opinion that they have a more noble role than this and some even think they have been called upon because of the incapability and inefficiency of the police or

any other security agency in maintaining law and order.

The resultant effect of such is that the military usually take over operations from the police instead of aiding the civil authorities as provided for in section 217 of the 1999 Constitution. The military particularly the Nigerian Army on the long run end up taking lead roles in all operations. This can give rise to jealousy and distrust between the other armed forces (or para-military forces) involved in the operations and the soldiers deployed for the joint operations which is capable of causing unhealthy rivalry which can eventually undermine security efforts. This has caused the Nigerian Army to advocate for a centralized system to co-ordinate the activities of Joint Task Force Operations in the country as such system would prevent order and counter order by various Heads of Security Agencies.<sup>30</sup>

#### **Military Strategy and Tactics**

Military strategy and tactics are basic necessities to the conduct of warfare as the former represents the planning, coordination, and general direction of military operations to meet overall political and military objectives, while the latter implement strategy by short-term decisions on the movement of troops and employment of weapons on the field of battle. Globally, armies all over the world have strategies and tactics employed in times of war, according to Rob cited in Idowu and Aregbesola, some of the most commonly cited art of war (strategy and tactics) are necessary principles and necessary objective, the defensive, offensive, surprise, security, unity of command, economy of force, maneuver and envelopment tactic which is the unexpected appearance of enemy troops on a flank or from behind can damage morale of the troops, and if a force is encircled it can be deprived of supplies or attacked from any side.<sup>31</sup>

However, it can be agreed that the internal security challenges/threats (such as insurgency,

<sup>27</sup> Maikomo and Ngomba, *Military Security Issues (MSI)*..., 17.

<sup>28</sup> Simon Utebor "Internal Security: Army to Refocus Training –COAS", (NBF News, Wednesday, 8 Dec 2010) <http://www.nigerianbestforum.com/blog/internal-security-army-to-refocus-training-%E2%80%93coas/#sthash.9crnByAL.dpuf>, accessed 26/04/23.

<sup>29</sup> Maikomo and Ngomba, *Military Security Issues (MSI)*..., 17.

<sup>30</sup> "Nigerian Army Advocates Centralized System for JTF Operations", (Radio Nigeria Ibadan online). <http://www.radionigeriaibadan.com/nigerian-army-advocates-centralized-system-for-jtf-operations>. Accessed 22/04/23.

<sup>31</sup> Idowu and Aregbesola, "Internal Security Operations and Human Rights Abuses in Nigeria: Issues and Challenges", 13

terrorism, banditry, vandalism among others) faced in the country do not always require all these tactics which the armed force ordinarily employ. These challenges is born out to the reality that the Nigerian armed forces (military) are traditionally equipped with conventional warfare strategy and tactics which is not usually applicable to most of the security issues faced by the joint operators.<sup>32</sup> Nevertheless, engaging with a hostile crowd of insurgents/bandits or even civilians (who deals in an unconventional method) in a conflict situation requires a completely different approach from an attack on an enemy position in a conventional warfare. Hence, the need to adjust to the unconventional scale of operations (guerilla mode of operations) and the tactical mobility required for a compactable joint operation.

#### **Communication and Language Barrier**

Communication and language barrier in Nigeria which is a heterogeneous society with more than 250 languages has been a major challenge for joint operation troops in various communities affected by insecurity. For instance, in the Plateau State conflict saga, according to Yake, some troops of the Special Task Force (STF) in many cases found it difficult to communicate with residents of the communities because of the language barrier. For example, Yoruba-speaking troops would find it difficult to communicate with the residents who primarily spoke Berom and not English as a language. Communication for some troops of such operation become easier when they are deployed to areas in Jos metropolis, while the ones in the hinterland communities continue to battle with the language barrier.<sup>33</sup> Sometimes the use of interpreters from host communities might not work well for the interest of justice and fairness to the different clashing parties involve. As a result, understanding such barrier creates an unknown fear in troops and makes them unnecessarily suspicious of some communication which may not be even directed at them. Hence, there is a need for the armed

forces to be encourage to learn languages spoken in conflict ridden hot zones.

#### **Lack of Political Will**

It can be deduced that from the persistent level of insecurity, the government (from local up to federal level) lack the political will to tackle the insecurity challenges in the country, as it (the government) was unable to decisively take action in tackling several conflicts at foundation level or resolving some of the conflicts diplomatically. For example, in the Middle Belt, the conflicts between the herdsmen and farmers in some of the states can be decisively settled, the vast and abundant farm lands can be allocated to both the farmers to farm and herders to graze their cattle appropriately.<sup>34</sup> In addition, the use of religion as a tool or instruments to escalate conflicts for political gain can in no small way frustrate the efforts of the Armed Forces in joint operations. This is owing to the fact that no matter the high level of military preparedness, either combat readiness or equipment readiness with enough manpower, the level of insecurity will remain in an unending cycle. This is because the caliber of insecurity is multifaceted and needs a multifaceted approach with the right political will.

However, the availability/accessibility of the above features or parameters to the extent of efficient performance or tasks of the armed forces indicates good operational readiness on one hand, while the inadequacy of the needed resources pose real challenges to the armed forces in joint operations and as such overstretch their capabilities.

Furthermore, other challenges of the Armed Forces includes lack of accountability; lack of proper resource management; inadequate cooperation (lack of institutional cooperation) among other agencies in the exchange of information and intelligence between the armed forces and other security agencies; media reports and public perception (i.e. investigative skills and professionalism); over centralization of the command structure; low commitment

<sup>32</sup> "Nigerian Army Advocates Centralized System for JTF Operations", (Radio Nigeria Ibadan online). <http://www.radionigeriaibadan.com/nigerian-army-advocates-centralized-system-for-jtf-operations>. Accessed 22/04/23.

<sup>33</sup> M. D. Yake, "Military Joint Task Force and the Challenges of Internal Security Operations in Nigeria: The Plateau State Experience", in O. O.

Oshita et al. (eds.), *Internal Security Management in Nigeria, Perspectives, Challenges and Lessons*, (Singapore, Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), Chapter 19, 455, pdf.

<sup>34</sup> Yake, "Military Joint Task Force and the Challenges of Internal Security Operations in Nigeria: The Plateau State Experience", 456.



among other challenges have all impacted in the armed forces effectiveness, efficiency and conduct of joint operations and internal security in Nigeria.

However, it is imperative to mention that despite the above challenges faced by the armed forces in joint operations, they have no doubt recorded some level of success in the attainment or accomplishment of their objective in their various operations. Such operations include those that are meant to checkmate the illegal activities of Niger-Delta militants with the aim of protecting critical economic infrastructures within Niger-Delta, such as operation 'Delta Safe', operation 'Crocodile Smile' among others.

### Conclusion

In the light of the above discourse, it can be vividly seen and worthy of note that despite the fact that the Nigerian Armed Forces is one of the fundamental pillar of the government and most consistent subsector of the Nigerian Federal Structure, the institution (Armed Forces) is strained with factious challenges culminating from inadequate manpower and underfunding, lack of modern logistics (technological equipment's), corruption, training constraint, mandate and orientation, military strategy and tactics, communication and language barrier, lack of political will to other obstacles like lack of institutional cooperation, media reports and public perception, low commitment among others, all of which in no small way continue to hamper the efficient performance or tasks of the armed forces in joint operations and internal security operations in Nigeria. Nevertheless, the availability of the needed operational resources will no doubt enhance the effectiveness, efficiency and conduct of the armed forces in achieving their joint operational objective. However, the need to curtail such menace lies with the reviewing and adoption of multifaceted approach with the right political will against the multifaceted caliber of insecurity on one hand; while governmental will; sincerity, commitment and dedication of the Armed Forces and cooperation of the local populace on the other hand will help in overcoming such beguiling challenges and accomplishment of the objective of any joint operations which is not just for achieving of peace but for strategic economic development of a contributing

functional and serviceable Armed Forces of standard specifications.

### Reference

- Dasuki, S. "Nigeria's Security Challenges: Way Forward". Text of Speech delivered at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Seminar held at the National Defence College, Abuja by the Alumni of the Institution.
- Dauda, M., "The Nigerian Police and the Management of Political Thuggery: A Study of Kaduna Metropolitan Area, 2007-2016", (Unpublished M.A. Thesis, NDA, Kaduna, 2021).
- Idowu, J. and Aregbesola, M.O. "Internal Security Operations and Human Rights Abuses in Nigeria: Issues and Challenges", Conference paper, September 2013, (doc.).
- IFRS 11 — Joint Arrangements – IAS Plus, <https://www.iasplus.com/en/standards/ifrs/ifrs11%23::~:~:text=3DA%2520joint%2520operation%2520is%2520a,part%2520are%2520called%2520joint%2520operators.&ved=>, accessed 21/04/23.
- International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), *Military Balance*, Routledge, 2007.
- Insecurity in Nigerian Military Short of Manpower Adequate Funding: Defence Minister", retrieved from <https://www.premiumtimesng.com>, accessed 20/04/23.
- Joint Publication. Joint Task Force Headquarters. 29 November, 2012. [http://www.defenseinnovationmarketplace.mil/resources/Joint\\_Doctrine\\_JTF\\_headquarters.pdf](http://www.defenseinnovationmarketplace.mil/resources/Joint_Doctrine_JTF_headquarters.pdf), accessed 25/04/23.
- Mahmud, A. "Reviewing Military Operations as Panacea for Insecurity", PRNigeria, 22 November, 2022, <https://prnigeria.com/2022/11/26/reviewing-military-operations-2/#>, accessed 21/04/23.
- Maikomo, J. M. and Ngomba, J. "Military Security Issues (MSI) and the Challenge of Internal Security Operations (ISOPs) in Nigeria", *Journal of International Affairs and Global Strategy*, Vol.62, (2018), 12-23.
- Nwezeh, K. "Imperative of Logistics: Lessons from the Nigerian Civil War for Operational Leaders", Army War College of Nigeria, 2021.

- Oshita O.O., Alumuna I.M., Onuoha F.C. (eds.), *Internal Security Management in Nigeria , Perspectives, Challenges and Lessons*, Singapore, Palgrave Macmillan, 2019. Pdf
- Sahara reporters “Nigerian Military Does Not Have Manpower, Technology to Defeat Book Haram” Sahara Reporters, New York, 20 February 2020, Retrieved from <https://www.sahara.reporters.com>, accessed 20/04/23.
- Section 217 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.
- THE LAW OF ARMED CONFLICT, *Internal Security Operations – Part A*, (International Committee of the Red Cross Unit for Relations with Armed and Security Forces 2002), 9-10.
- Utebor, S. “Internal Security: Army to Refocus Training –COAS”, (NBF News, Wednesday, 8 Dec 2010) <http://www.nigerianbestforum.com/blog/internal-security-army-to-refocus-training-%E2%80%93coas/#sthash.9crnByAL.dpuf>, accessed 26/04/23.
- Yake, M. D. “Military Joint Task Force and the Challenges of Internal Security Operations in Nigeria: The Plateau State Experience”, (July 2019). Retrieved from: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/328586038>. Accessed 22/04/23.
- Yake, M. D., “Military Joint Task Force and the Challenges of Internal Security Operations in Nigeria: The Plateau State Experience”, in Oshita O.O., Alumuna I.M., Onuoha F.C. (eds.), *Internal Security Management in Nigeria, Perspectives, Challenges and Lessons*, Singapore, Palgrave Macmillan, 2019, Chapter 19, 441-459, pdf.
- “Nigeria”, *International Humanitarian Law (IHL)*, Directorate of Legal Services, Nigerian Army, (1994), 38, §4. <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/ar/customary-ihl/v2/rule4>, accessed 21/04/23.
- “Nigerian Army Advocates Centralized System for JTF Operations”, (Radio Nigeria Ibadan online). <http://www.radionigeriaibadan.com/nigerian-army-advocates-centralized-system-for-jtf-operations>. Accessed 22/04/23.
- Saleh, Bala and Ouedraogo Emile (2018), “National Security Strategy Development, Africa Center for Strategic Studies, [2019-04-NSSD-Case-Study-Nigeria-EN.pdf](https://www.africacenter.org/files/30000/2019-04-NSSD-Case-Study-Nigeria-EN.pdf) ([africacenter.org](http://africacenter.org))

