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## Governance and Vigilantism in Enugu State, 2007-2016

Ulu, Kalu Oko

Social Science Unit, School of General Studies  
University of Nigeria, Nsukka

### Abstract

*This study investigated the relationship between governance and the activities of local vigilante group in Enugu State. The study pursued two objectives namely: how the high rate of criminal activities led to the introduction of local vigilante group in Enugu State; and analyze how poor equipment and lack of adequate funding of vigilante group led to the continuous criminal activities in the State. The theoretical framework is anchored on Marxian instrumentalist theory of the state. Importantly, this study relied on documentary method of data collection which is a qualitative research method and data obtained were critically analyzed using the content analysis method. The findings of the study revealed that high rate of criminal activities such as armed robbery, burglary, kidnapping, and Fulani herdsmen attack led to the introduction of local vigilante group in Enugu State. The study also revealed that poor equipment of the vigilante group, inadequate funding, lack of provision of patrol vehicles to the group, poor training of members and poor communication and monitoring gadgets led to poor performance and/or inability of the vigilante groups to combat criminal activities such as armed robbery, burglary, kidnapping, manslaughter and arson in Enugu State. The study recommended, among others, that Enugu State government should make effort to provide adequate funding to the local vigilante group in the state, to help the members of the group in procuring vital equipment that will promote effective combat against criminal activities in the state. Most essentially, Enugu State government should assist the members of the vigilante group by providing patrol vehicles that will help them to carry out their duties effectively and undoubtedly liaise with the military or other federal security outfits to train the members of the vigilante group for efficient performance in crime control and security in the State.*

**Keywords:** Governance, Security, Vigilante group, Criminal activities, Police inefficiency, Post-colonial state, High crime rate.

### Introduction

There seems to be disconnection between governance and security in Enugu State. This disconnection starts from the high level of insecurity

witnessed, not only in urban areas but in rural areas of the state. This has led to formation of vigilante groups. In Enugu State, vigilante is also known as neighborhood watch.

The role of government in the security of lives and property of the people, as the barometer for good governance, cannot be overemphasized. Security is a social pre-requisite for the survival of any society. No one survives in an environment where there is no security. Business and social activities cannot go on freely without adequate security. Thus, every society takes appropriate measures to protect the lives and property of people living within its boundaries. The fundamental essence of security may be the reason why various security agents have been introduced in Nigeria in order to secure people from criminal victimization.

Conceptually, security has to do with the act of prevention and protection in order to ensure that certain facilities, equipment, persons or activities are safe from damage, pilferage, destruction, murder or disruption. Ake (2009) defined security as the protection of life and property. Navidnia (2010) perceived security as the degree of resistance to, or protection from, harm. It applies to any vulnerable and/or valuable asset, such as a person, dwelling, community, item, nation, or organization. When inadequate protection is provided for the people and property, we say that there is no security.

Insecurity on the other hand, is the antithesis of security. Beland (2010) argued that insecurity is the state of fear or anxiety stemming from a concrete or alleged lack of protection. It refers to lack or inadequate freedom from danger or protection. In Nigeria, the problem of insecurity is witnessed on daily basis. There are cases of murder, rape, kidnapping, trafficking, vandalism, insurgency, among others. The worst seems to be Boko Haram insurgency in the North, and the havoc being presently caused by the Fulani herdsmen especially in South East, Nigeria. Ekpenyong (2009) noted that the major challenge facing the country is insecurity at local, state and federal levels. Olu (2013) also argued that on daily basis, Nigerians confront various forms of security challenges, ranging from domestic violence and sexual offences to armed robbery, kidnapping and murder.

In South East, Nigeria in particular, the spate of kidnappings and high-profile armed robberies has become a major threat to the livelihood and wellbeing of the people (Agbo, 2013). In many instances, criminal gangs have stalled social and economic activities as they raided homes, markets, banks, churches and social events such as burial and marriage ceremonies (Ugwuanyi, 2015). However, the solution to overcoming these security challenges is determined by the nature of governance within a state.

Governance connotes the manner in which power is exercised in the management of the resources (human and materials) of a group of people for the attainment of the objective which man is capable, only in some form of political organization, most especially the state (Nwankwo, 2008). Good governance is one that provides the safety of life and property of the people in the state. To ensure good governance in Nigeria, the Federal Government has created a number of security agents such as Police and Civil Defence Corps. Unfortunately, these security agencies in many states of Nigeria have not been able to tackle the problem of insecurity at the grassroots, thus, the decision of some states to search for supplementary security outfit such as local vigilante which is gradually taking over security in most rural areas in Nigeria.

The formation of vigilante group is not a recent development. Before 1900, many vigilant groups were formed in frontier areas of the United States. In 1851 and 1856, concerned citizens in San Francisco organized vigilante committees that forcefully restored peace and order (Singer, 2010). In South Africa, vigilante activity is frequently justified as ‘filling a policing gap’ due to police inefficiency, corruption and conspiracy with criminals, practical failing in the criminal justice system (Teka, 2012). In Sierra Leone, vigilante activities have been explained in terms of police ineffectiveness in combating crimes (Brownyn, 2009).

In Nigeria, vigilantism existed in the pre-colonial era. Human Right Watch and Center for Law Enforcement and Education Report (2002) noted that “vigilante and other self-defence groups currently operating in Nigeria have roots that reach deep into the country’s history. In the colonial era, some though not all independent local communities, especially in the South East maintained their own standing Army to defend their territory against the threat of invasion from neighbouring communities. Although there was no equivalent modern-day structure at that time, some parallels can be drawn between these groups which were created by local communities for their own protection, and the more recently formed self-defence groups”. This is also true in Enugu State where local vigilante has been used as a means of both social and crime control even before the advent of colonial rule.

In Enugu State, there is virtually no community that does not have a local vigilante group. But despite the existence of these vigilante groups, various crimes ranging from rape, murder, kidnapping and the worst, invading of houses in the night to kill villagers and torch their houses by herdsmen have continued in the state. It, therefore, becomes necessary to systematically examine issues associated with the introduction of local vigilante and its activities in Enugu State.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Crime is a social canker-worm that has eaten deep into the social fabric of the Nigerian society such that its effect is multifaceted. In Nigeria and its federating units, civil anarchy has continued to thrive leading to crime brandish of unprecedented height of brutality, robbery, killings, rape, and wanton destruction of lives and property. The acts are, sometimes, not accompanied by theft indicating they may be driven by frustration, resentment and anger primarily (Francis, 2005). This kind of breakdown exists mainly because the state condones or tolerates harmful behaviours against its own citizens or otherwise an indication that the state has failed to offer protection because of some reasons (Agbo, 2013).

In the 1970s, the popular crimes that were prevalent in Nigeria include: armed robbery, stealing, assault, burglary, rape etc; but today terrorism, bomb blasts, kidnapping, drug trafficking, money laundry, child-trafficking, assassinations and other criminal activities have become the order of the day. Ekhomu (2010) noted that “Nigeria was beset with myriad of security challenges such as kidnapping, terrorism, civil disturbance, political violence, fraud, assassination, armed robbery, among others” (cited in Utebor & Ekpimah, 2010:11). In spite of stringent laws and punishments to check these crimes, they have continued to be on the increase with the police seemingly helpless and incapable of controlling the savaging crime situation.

The Police are charged with the responsibility of internal security by ensuring safety of lives and property. But the question here is “has the police been able to carry out their functions effectively and efficiently?” Of course, the answer is obvious! To tame the wave of the alarming insecurity, the people now resorted to the formation of vigilante groups in different localities of this country, including Enugu State.

However, the introduction of vigilante group has not been able to minimise crimes to an encouraging rate especially in Enugu State as there are still cases of criminal activities and insecurity challenges reported in the state on daily basis. In light of the above puzzle, the following research questions were raised to guide this study:

1. Is there any positive link between the astronomical rise in criminal activities and the introduction of local vigilante in Enugu State?
2. Does poor equipment and lack of funding of the vigilante group account for the increase in criminal activities in Enugu State?

### **Literature Review**

The central focus of this study is to examine the relationship between governance and vigilantism in Enugu State between 2007 and 2016. The aim of the literature review, therefore, is to determine the gaps in extant literature. It also helps to review some relevant literatures associated with the key research questions. Therefore, the review shall focus on the following themes:

- Concept of vigilante group
- High rate of criminal activities and introduction of local vigilante
- Under-equipping of vigilante group and increase in criminal activities

### **Concept of Vigilante Group**

The term vigilante is derived from the Latin word *vigilans* which means to be watchful. However, the meaning of this concept, which has an old social history depended on the peculiarities of the situation where it existed. Between the 1830s and 1850s, vigilance committees were formed to help fugitive black slaves and ensure their obedience and of the abolitionists to the pro-slavery majority in America (Gilje, 1996). In the 19th century, vigilante was set up in frontier towns and rural communities of United States to keep order and put down illegal activities by criminals (Slotkin, 1985). In such places, they supplemented the duties of legal authorities by holding formal trials before administering usually capital punishment. Generally, vigilante groups in the US operated in protecting the breakdown of law and order (Stock, 1996). The initiative of citizens of respective societies the world over, towards maintaining order outside the formal law persists up to the present day. The intricate situation in discussing vigilantism in Nigeria and elsewhere in the world is that vigilante groups try to justify their existence by accusing the law and its agents of being too slow in dispensing justice but reversely, the law accuses the vigilante groups of its violation.

It cannot be stated exactly when Nigeria communities began to form private “security groups” to protect them and their environment. However, the first category of these groups are Odua Peoples’ Congress (OPC), Bakassi Boys (BB), Niger Delta Militias, Movement for the Actualization of a Sovereign State of Biafra (MOSSOB), Hisbah, etc. These groups have gradually had their security services influenced by political interests and the masses question if they are still vigilante groups or militias. The second category comprised of the groups that operate in both urban and rural areas under the auspices of the Vigilante Groups of Nigeria (VGN), in partnership with the police. The vigilantes emerged in their communities to protect the lives and properties of the people. Having considered both the positive and negative arguments about the role of vigilante groups in community policing,

it is posited that though the vigilantes have suffered series of setbacks, their activities in maintaining law and order cannot be ignored easily.

### **High Rate of Criminal Activities and Introduction of Local Vigilante**

Murphy (2008) defined crime broadly as behaviour in which individuals obtain resources from others via force, fraud, or stealth. This concept of crime has been refuted by Rubenstein (2012) who argued that crime is not committed only when resources are obtained from others via force, fraud or stealth. Rubenstein explained that some crimes, for instance, assassination does not involve obtaining resources by force, fraud and stealth. In the opinion of Henslin (2008) crime is the violation of rules that have been written into law. In the light of the above definitions, crime is a social problem in the society due to its negative consequences on the well-being of society. Marshall (2008) defined crime as simply offences which go beyond the personal and into the public sphere, breaking prohibitory rules or laws, to which legitimate punishment or sanctions are attached, and requires the intervention of a public authority, i.e., the State or a local body. Marshall further argued that crimes include stealing, murder, rape, kidnapping, blackmailing, and terrorism among others. This definition pointed out the indices which can be used to measure crime. Michael (2010) argued that legally, crimes usually are acts forbidden by law that can be punished by imprisonment and/or fine. He stated that murder, robbery, burglary, rape, drunken driving, child neglect, and failure to pay your taxes all are common examples. Nwaeze (2010) posited that crime is any act or omission that violates the criminal law of the state which is punishable by the state after prosecution and conviction.

Some scholars have pointed out that criminal activities are not peculiar to particular state or nation rather it is universal (Simpson, 2012). Amoke (2013) opined that just as crimes are committed in Nigeria, so it is committed in other parts of the world – United State, Canada, Russia, England, among others. In Nigeria, a lot of criminal activities have been going on in recent time. Eze (2015) stated that the emergence of Boko Haram and herdsmen killing have given shape to other types of criminal activities such as murder, stealing, kidnapping, bombing, destruction of properties, invasion of people's houses at night to slaughter them, rape, destruction of farm, to mention but few. The emergence of Boko Haram has, therefore, created a new pattern of crime involving deliberate suicide bombing.

The cursory look at some of the state level (disaggregated) data in Nigeria is equally worrisome. For instance, in 2002, 52 cases of armed robbery were reported in Abia State; but in 2004, it rose to 176. In Edo State,

71 cases of armed robbery were reported to the Police in 2002; the number steadily increased to 144 in 2005 and 163 in 2006. In 2008, the Abia State Police Command recorded a total of 940 criminal cases and arrested 1,275 suspects. It is pertinent to recall that between 2009 and 2010 Aba, the economic hub of Abia State was laid prostrate by the activities of robbers and kidnappers especially through the exploits of the late Obioma Nwankwo (a.k.a Osisikankwu). Lagos, which is the commercial nerve centre of Nigeria recorded a total of 12,837 criminal cases and 14,996 arrests of suspects. Onah (2015) argued that ransome-kidnapping and hostage-taking are no longer restricted to the Niger Delta area, or South-South of Nigeria. With reported cases in Enugu, Lagos, Abuja, Benin city, Owerri, and now Kaduna and Kano, this brand of terrorism has become a national phenomenon as the entire country is now a kidnappers' den.

#### **Under-Equipping of Vigilante Group and Increase in Criminal Activities**

Donald (2008) argued that there has not been proper equipping of community security outfit in Nigeria in terms of procurement of arms and ammunitions, patrol vans, among others. Ugwoke (2012) was of the opinion that there has not been proper equipping of vigilante group since its formation in Nigeria. He insisted that vigilante group is more theoretical than practical. Eze (2015) suggested that proper equipping of vigilante group in Nigeria will minimise the rate of crimes committed in rural communities in Nigeria. The author was of the view that vigilante group are more informed about criminal activities in communities than the government security agencies such as the Police. Abubakar (2015) classified equipping of vigilante group into two: the procurement of weapons necessary for combating crimes in communities and the training of the members of the vigilante group. In procurement of the weapons, Abubakar included providing guns, bullets, boots, bullet-proof wears and patrol vans. He argued that for the aim of vigilante group to come to realization in Nigeria, government should train members of the vigilante group in crime detection and control. Ossai (2016) argues that there is poor equipping of vigilante group in Nigeria as most of them do not have functional guns, not to talk about bullets. Based on the above review, it seems that there is poor equipping of vigilante group in Nigeria of which Enugu State is part of. This could be responsible for the increase in criminal activities in Nigeria.

The transformation of vigilante group from a threat to an asset was accomplished by conceptualizing vigilante group as junior partners in the business of policing, who were working to assist their senior partners, the police in keeping the peace (Ngwu & Onah, 2012).



The emergence of private policing was not a cause for alarm since it did not threaten the state's claims to monopoly over the definition of peace. This position was validated by recourse to the earlier acceptance of the notion of legitimate self-help (Beeker, 2004). This position was supported by Kakalik and Willdhorn (2012) that the industry did not pose a challenge to the state and that the major functions of private guards according to them are to prevent, detect, and report criminal acts on private property.

Nwaeze (2010) investigated the impact of vigilante groups on crime control in contemporary Nigeria, particularly in Udenu Local Government Area (L.G.A) of Enugu State. The result indicated that Nigeria Police is ineffective with regard to crime control and vigilante groups in its current form sprang up to make up for this ineffectiveness. It also showed that vigilante groups are gaining prominence as agents of crime control in contemporary Nigeria, particularly, Udenu L.G.A of Enugu State. The result equally revealed that vigilante group members are recruited and monitored through their communities and that they are effective in crime control. Also, the result indicated that the best way of solving the problem of crime in Nigeria is by increasing the activities of vigilante groups. However, lack of firearms, poor funding, and lack of patrol vehicles are the major problems confronting vigilante groups. More so, based on the major findings, it was recommended that vigilante group members should operate within the framework of law. Finally, security committees should be established at the local government level and these committees should meet periodically to discuss security matters in their areas.

### **Gap in Literature**

The reviewed literature, however, did not take into cognizance the high rate of criminal activities in Enugu State, but rather, in Nigeria as a whole. Equally, none of the studies reviewed investigated the high rate of criminal activities and how it led to the introduction of local vigilante in Enugu State. The scholars' review equally failed to examine the poor equipment of vigilante group and how it led to increase in criminal activities in Enugu State. Indeed, where mentions were made of these problems by scholars, their analysis often lacked empirical evidence needed for generalization. Therefore, this study is set out to fill the noticeable gap which earlier scholars have not adequately filled.

### **Methodology**

According to Biereenu-Nnabugwu (2004: p.126), "method is defined as a means of achieving an aim, a definite way of ordering activity or indeed a

systematic technique for observing, measuring, recording, describing and experimenting. Thus, it is a useful scheme for ordering or gathering research data, a basis for inference and interpretation as well as for theoretical explanation and prediction.

This study relied on documentary method of data collection which is a qualitative study method. Documentary method involves establishing information on research work from available published documents such as books, journals, periodicals, conference papers, research reports, technical reports of concerned agencies, the internet sources, etc., (Ugwu, 2012). It is the use of documents, to support the viewpoint or argument of an academic work (Scott, 2006). In this study, views from the literatures will be used to determine the relationship between governance and the activities of local vigilante in Enugu State and establish how the high rate of criminal activities (poor governance) led to formation of local vigilante group in Enugu State. Importantly, the study adopted content analysis method for data analysis.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study adopts the neo-Marxist instrumentalist theory of the state as our analytic tool. This framework is believed to possess strong analytical power to explain and understand high rate of criminal activities in Nigeria in general and Enugu state in particular.

The Marxist instrumentalist theory of the state postulates that the state is an instrument in the hands of the ruling class for enforcing and guaranteeing the stability of the class structure itself. The instrumentalist theory of the states is formulated and popularized by such scholars as Sweezy (1942:243), Miliband (1969:5; 1977:1; 1983:37-68; Marx and Engels, 1970:80; Lenin, 1974; Jessop, 1977:350-357; 1982:12; Poulantzas, 1969:67-78; 1973:27-54; 1978; Okolie, 2004:16; Domhoff, 1978; 1976:221-224; 1986-87:295-330; 1990; Barrow, 2008:84-108; 2002:3-52; Barrow, 1993; 2000:87-118; Wetherly, 2008:109-131).

The above instrumentalist scholars generally argued that the state has remained a veritable and potent instrument for domination, deprivation, suppression and alienation of the many by the very few who control state power. That is, the state is just an instrument in the hands of the ruling class for the pursuit of their personal and/or private group interest. Importantly, the instrumentalist theoretical propositions are firmly anchored in classical Marxism (Barrow, 1969:3). In fact, Jessop (1982:12) observes that the instrumentalist thesis can be traced back, at least, as early as the German Ideology (1845-46), where Marx and Engels (1970:80) claim that the state:

...is nothing more than the form of organization which the bourgeois necessarily adopt both for internal and external purposes, for the mutual guarantee of their property and interest...the State is the form in which the individuals of a ruling class assert their common interests.

The instrumentalist thesis projects that the state is normally the State of the most powerful, economically dominant class, which by its means becomes also the politically dominant class and so acquires new means of holding down and exploiting the oppressed class (Engels, 1972). Engels also reiterates that the ancient state was, above all, the state of the slave-owners for holding down the slaves, just as the feudal state was the organ of the nobility for holding down the peasant serfs and bondsmen, and the modern representative state is an instrument for domination and exploring wage-labour by capital (Barrow, 1993:130).

Resulting from the above, the major concern of this theoretical proposition is to reveal the various ways in which the modern state is used as an instrument for the exploitation of wage-labour by capital and/or the maintenance of class domination in the political sphere (Jessop, 1982:12-13). In this light, Lenin (1974:12-15) describes "the state as an instrument for the exploitation of the oppressed class". In a capitalist society the oppressed class, are those easily exploited, dominated and alienated from the surplus values in a state. On the other hand, the capitalist class otherwise known as the ruling class simply refers to the group of individuals who occupy the same position in the nation's economy. Those people who really own and control the economy, that is, the economically powerful ones who use their economic weight to dominate others and influence policies in the polity. Thus, members of the capitalist class are identified as those who occupy the managerial and ownership functions of corporations (Mintz, 1989: 208; Zeitlin, 1974; Useem, 1984). In the Marxist scheme, Miliband (1969:23) asserts:

The ruling class of capitalist society is the class which owns and controls the means of production and which is able, by virtue of the economic power thus conferred upon it, to use the state as its instrument for the domination of society.

Nicos Poulantzas, a renowned scholar of the instrumentalist theory of the state considers the state to be 'only a simple tool or instrument manipulated at will by the ruling class (Poulantzas, 1969:74). The state is,

therefore, construed as a simple tool or instrument of ruling class purpose. This means that the relation between the bourgeois class and the state is an objective relation, and the function of the state is a determinate social formation interest of the dominant class. This implies that the state in a capitalist society basically functions to foster, advance and defend capital accumulation and profit (Asobie, 1990:17-19), contrary to the general assumption that the state is an unbiased umpire and neutral power broker with respect to the interest of capital and labour.

Hence, the instrumentalist theory proposes that the state is an instrument in the hands of the ruling class to serve a particular class interest (Onuoha, 2000:202). That is, the state pursues the interest of the capitalist class simply because the state is controlled by this class. Furthermore, since members of the ruling class are directly involved in both the state machineries and economic process, the state in its formulation and implementation of public policies and programmes pursues the interest of the ruling class and not the general interest of the entire citizenry.

Basically, state in post-colonial societies functions to maintain the status quo. According to Alavi Hamza in his seminal essay, "The State in Post Colonial Societies". The state was not established by an indigenous bourgeoisie, but by a foreign one, for the subordination of the natives and the exploitation of their resources. Mba et al (2015: p.5) argue:

"This unique nature of the post-colonial state is due to the fact that the weak economic base of the investors of that the state converted the state into a veritable instrument of primitive accumulation. This led to inter and intra class struggles, but more of intra among the nascent or emerging petit bourgeoisie which revolve around the state, since the state is an instrument of primitive accumulation.

Furthermore, there is neglect of the masses which, in turn, creates a near Hobbesian state of nature where life becomes poor, nasty, brutish and short; a war of all against all. This state of affairs gives rise to reckless individualism, (Mba et al, 2015).

Judging from the above scenario, this theory adequately explained why there is high rate of criminal activities in Enugu State in particular and Nigeria in general. Nigerian State is a direct instrument at the disposal of political class for primitive accumulation to the peril of development strategies and

collective interest of Nigerian youths, thereby making the youths to engage in all forms of criminal activities in order to survive.

The cause of this high rate of criminality is usually attributed to unemployment, lack of indigenous human capacity building and neglect of the collective interest of the Nigerian youths by Nigerian corrupt and self-seeking leaders. Therefore, it is within the context of the Marxian instrumentalist theory of the state, that the cause of high rate of criminal activities (which results from poor governance) and the subsequent introduction of vigilante group can be explained and understood.

### **High Rate of Criminal Activities and Introduction of Vigilante Group in Enugu State**

There have been cases of criminal activities in many states in Nigeria, including Enugu State. In the midst of the increase in crime, studies show that the security agencies, especially the Police, have not been responsive in curbing the criminal activities.

### **Criminal Activities in Enugu State**

There is no doubt that series of criminal activities have been recorded in Enugu State in recent time, just as it is recorded in other states in Nigeria. On daily basis, one crime or the other is reported on newspapers, television, and radio within the state. For instance, Enugu State Command recorded over 9000 crime-related cases from 2010 to 2016. For the years between 2014 and 2016, the reported cases of kidnapping and armed robbery were high (Onuaguluchi, 2017). Enugu State has been reported to have high rates of criminal activities and victimisation that have defied the measures, introduced by governments, for its management in recent time (Agbo, 2013). The scariest undertone of criminal activities is compelled by the prevalent cases of herdsmen activities in the state evidenced in their robbery, rape and invasion of people's houses in the night to slaughter them on little provocation (Ugwu, 2016). Ugwuanyi (2015) also noted that armed insurgencies ravaging Enugu State has been increased by the Fulani herdsmen who have operated on both highways and local roads within Enugu State. There are several reasons adduced for increase in crime rate in Enugu State. Okpe (2014) argued that following the 2003 election, there was an abundance of guns in private hands for political thuggery and, are now being used for other criminal activities such as armed robbery, kidnapping among others. Similarly, Ugwueke traced the proliferation of heavy and light weapons by the Fulani herdsmen as the cause of high rate of criminal activities in the state. He gave an instance of the invasion of Fulani herdsmen in early hours of Monday, April 25th, 2016 in

Ukpabi-Nimbo, a sleepy village in Uzo-Uwani LGA of Enugu State and killing of over thirty (30) persons without the police apprehending any of them. Other reasons are unemployment, ostentation, hardship, revenge, embezzlement, drunkenness, drug abuse, hatred, laziness, keeping bad friends, self-dissatisfaction and media influence.

### **Problems of Nigerian Police in Crime Control**

The Police Forces in Nigeria, since its emergence during the colonial rule has been criticised as ineffective and corrupt (Alemika 1988, 1993, 2003; Ohonbamu 1975; Odekunle 1979; Kaplan, 1967). In one of the empirical studies conducted to ascertain the public perception of the Nigerian Police by the residents of Enugu State, conducted by Onwuama (2016), it was revealed that 81.6% of the respondents were of the opinion that the performance of the Nigerian Police in the state is very poor (Onwuama, 2016). In the words of Dambazau: “so many factors have been attributed to the police failure to control crime in Nigeria. Firstly, there is the issue of lack of professionalism, generally attributed to recruitment policy, which has effect on the quality of manpower; the problem of poor training and general atmosphere of indiscipline. Secondly, corruption in the Nigeria Police is said to be endemic, and has eaten deep into the very fabric of the system. Okereke (2015) observed that, many Nigerians see the policeman as a “lazy, corrupt, inefficient, bribe-taking, money-extorting officer. This practice has greatly soiled the image of the Police. If the Police which are employed to prevent and detect corruption or crime and bring culprits to judgment are themselves corrupt, then the society is at risk and the citizens are insecure. Similarly, this lack of integrity on the part of the police has also greatly impacted negatively on the police efficiency. The police have in most cases been laws themselves, killing innocent people, and detaining persons arbitrarily and with impunity.

### **Formation of Vigilante Group**

Village or community guards have existed in Igbo communities in the South East of Nigeria for many years; the roots of the more recently-formed vigilante groups can be traced back in part to these traditions. Since at least the late 1980s, local forms of vigilantism have been common in South Eastern Nigeria. Most villages have some form of watch or protection, either through organized systems of night guards or through more informal networks to monitor the local situation. Throughout the mid-1990s, state authorities, the Police, and traditional rulers called upon villages to set up vigilante patrols; these often involved contests for rights and privileges and negotiations between young men and their elders, as well as the formal judicial bodies.

A combination of political, economic and social factors in Nigeria including high unemployment, poor relations between the Police and local communities, widespread corruption, and absence of confidence and trust in the state and its institutions- has resulted in the formation and recruitment of people to these vigilante groups.

The term "vigilante" is used loosely in Nigeria to refer to a range of different groups, each with different motives. A variety of other armed groups, many of them formed along ethnic lines in different parts of the country, are also described as vigilantes. Their existence is a welcome development as they fill a gap created by the inefficiency of the Police Force that has the statutory duty of maintaining peace and order. If the vigilante could exist as a grassroots organization and a community based policing outfit, there would not be any problem.

In Enugu State just like other places where vigilante groups have been introduced, criminal activities could have led to the formation of vigilante group. This was as a result of explosion of violent crimes that rose in the area in late 1990s. Armed robbery and other forms of violent crime reached unprecedented levels. People were gripped by fear of insecurity and could hardly sleep during the night. The Nigeria Police Force did not help matters and people were afraid to report any case of crime to the police for fear of reprisal attack. Consequently, vigilante groups were formed to match force with force. This indeed alleviated the problems created by the activities of these hoodlums in the areas and people were able to sleep with their eyes closed. In summary, vigilantism in its current form in the State emerged as a response to violent crimes that erupted and continued to rise in many parts of the state and the obvious inability of Police to control or prevent them.

### **Poor Equipment of Vigilante Group and Increase in Criminal Activities**

Poor equipment is one of the major setbacks in every field of work. In the context of this study, it is the major problem hindering the vigilante group from effective control and prevention of criminal activities, and has led to increase in criminal activities. Hence, this section discussed the following issues:

- Lack of patrol vehicle to vigilante group and burglary in Enugu State
- Inadequate funding of vigilante group and increase in armed robbery
- Poor training of members of vigilante group and its implications on the security of the state

### **Lack of Patrol Vehicle for Members of the Vigilante Group and Burglary in Enugu State**

Another problem that has affected the effectiveness of vigilante group in Enugu State in combating criminal activities is lack of available patrol vehicles to monitor, prevent and control crime. In the opinion of Asadu (2014), the Enugu State government has not made visible effort in empowering the vigilante group through provision of patrol vehicles. In a study conducted by Ezema (2016) to find out the problems affecting vigilante group in the state, majority of the respondents who are also members of the vigilante group pointed out that the groups are finding it difficult to prevent crimes due to lack of resources such as patrol vehicles or fund for hiring and fuelling patrol vehicles. In consideration of the above, it is suggested that these vigilante groups who work mostly in the night will find it difficult watching over the communities or responding quickly to calls from members of the community if there is emergency without functional patrol vehicles. Unlike the Police, these group lack necessary resources that will motivate them to keep vigil and prevent or arrest criminals operating in the night. For instance, Ugwuja (2016) revealed that there is increase in the rate of burglary in the state. These problems could be connected with poor equipment of the vigilante in the state.

### **Inadequate Funding of Vigilante Group and Increase in Armed Robbery in Enugu State**

Lack of funding of vigilante group is another challenge that has affected the role of vigilante group and subsequently led to the increase of criminal activities in the state. Onyia (2014) affirmed that lack of funding is actually one of major problems of vigilante group in Enugu State. Lack of funding has two way implications ranging from encouragement of corruption and inability to acquire necessary security equipment. It is hoped that if Enugu State government can inject the right amount of money into funding the vigilante group, then, there may be hope in the quest for the successful accomplishment of the role of vigilante group in the state.

Scholars such as Ugwu (2015) has emphasised the problem of poor funding, and indicated that inadequate funding and poor remuneration of vigilante group has impacted negatively in the effectiveness of vigilante group in curbing crimes in the state because no organisation can achieve its objective without the provision of adequate funds to meet its requirement. This is, therefore, an indication that the inability of the vigilante group to effectively minimise crime in the state is correlated with poor or inadequate funding. The members of vigilante group have many tasks which require funds at the choice



of carrying out their duty. Some of these tasks are providing functional phones for the members; buying credit to make phone calls, hiring vehicles on emergency, fuelling the vehicle, transporting themselves from one place to another, especially, in the night, procuring uniform for identification purposes, production of identification cards for members, buying bullets and other security apparatus, among others. Lack of this fund to provide these needs are the problems affecting the performance of vigilante groups in communities in Enugu State. Nweke (2015) argued that insufficient funding of vigilante groups have prevented good ideas, quality training and enrollment of new members into the vigilante, leaving only those with high sense of sacrifice as members. In this development, Nweke reported an inquiry he made regarding funding of vigilante group from one of the members. According to him, the response was “we cannot kill ourselves without even encouragement, not to talk about funding from the government” (Nweke, 2015).

It is obvious that in order to help themselves, the members of vigilante group collect money from the members of the community. Sometimes, the money being collected ranges from 200 to 500 naira a month, but this cannot adequately sustain the needs of the group, thus, leaving room for ineffectiveness among the members, and leading to increase in criminal activities within the state.

There have been cases of armed robbery in Enugu State in recent time. Armed robbery is the aggravated form of robbery. To migrate to the level of armed robbery after establishing that there was a robbery, it is essential that there is proof that the accused person was armed or in company of an armed person. Okonkwo (2014) reported that in Enugu State at present, no place is safe from the ravages of the armed robbers, as they attack homes, offices, shops, restaurants and churches to rob, rape, maim and kill. They operate at the banks with dynamites, strike at filling stations and swoop on victims at traffic jams (Nweze, 2014). For instance, on July 18 2009, a dare-devil gang of armed robbers attacked four commercial banks, bombed the Nsukka Urban Police Division and shot dead the Divisional Police Officer (DPO), Chief Superintendent of Police (CSP), Joe Ejitaga. The security situation in Enugu State is so appalling that armed robbers operate on a daily basis, leaving sorrow, tears and blood in their trail.

Armed robbers no longer operate only at night, but also operate brazenly in broad daylight in the state. There have been a number of cases where armed robbers operated in the day. For instance, most commuters travelling from Nsukka to Enugu capital are usually robbed on the way by armed robbers, some of the robbers are suspected to be Fulani herdsmen. In an empirical study conducted by Onah (2015) to determine the incidence of

armed robbery in Enugu State, the findings revealed that over 72% of the respondents agreed that armed robbery is on the increase. Some of the respondents indicated that they have been robbed with gun; and the robbers made away with their valuables such as phones, laptops and money. The reports above show that armed robbery is one of the criminal activities in Enugu State.

### **Poor Training of Members of Vigilante Group and its Implications on the Security of the State**

Training is one of the logistics requirements for successfully carrying out of detective and preventing task by any security outfit. The Vigilante' Group as a voluntary community security network whose members willingly assist in the prevention of crime and promote security consciousness, are supposed to receive adequate training in order to achieve their objectives of minimising crime. Unfortunately, in Enugu State, members of the vigilante group have not been adequately trained. Most of the members lack the security sagacity that is required for such sensitive task. Unlike the Police, members of the vigilante group are not even trained on the use of gun or bullets because of lack of availability of these resources. It, therefore, becomes questionable how a man who has not received practical and theoretical training can effectively contribute in minimising criminal activities.

From the above discourse, it can be seen that many problems, including, lack of provision of arms equipment, lack of provision of patrol vehicle for members of the vigilante group, inadequate funding and poor training of members of vigilante group, are the major problems affecting the activities of vigilante group in Enugu State.

### **Findings**

The findings of the study revealed that:

- High rate of criminal activities such as armed robbery, burglary, kidnapping, and Fulani herdsmen attack led to the introduction of local vigilante group in Enugu State.
- The study also revealed that poor equipment of the vigilante group accounts for their inability to fight crime effectively in the state.
- Inadequate funding and lack of provision of patrol vehicles to the vigilante group undermine their efficiency in combating crime in the area.
- Poor training of members and poor communication and monitoring gadgets led to poor performance and/or inability of the vigilante groups

to combat criminal activities such as armed robbery, burglary, kidnapping, manslaughter and arson in Enugu State.

### **Recommendations and Conclusion**

The steady increase of crimes and undetected crimes of various criminal activities raised a general feeling of insecurity of lives and property among Nigerians and has led to the formation of local vigilante group. In consideration of the above, this study investigated the relationship between governance and local vigilante in Enugu State.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings made, the following recommendations are put forward for policy formulation and implementation:

1. Government should promote good governance, provision of social welfare services, youth empowerment and developmental programmes; and should also ensure that the conventional security agents are properly equipped for an effective crime prevention and control through intelligence-led policing in Enugu State.
2. The state government should make effort to provide adequate funding to the local vigilant in the state. This will help the members of the group in procuring vital items such as security outfit, patrol vehicle, torch light and other items that can enhance their communication and monitoring strategies. This will help promote effective combat against the increased criminal activities in the state.

### **Conclusion**

This study examined the relationship between governance and local vigilante in Enugu State. The data collected indicated that the rate of crime was high before the formation of vigilante groups in Enugu State. It was also discovered that high rate of crime and the police ineffectiveness led to the formation of vigilante groups. More so, vigilante groups were perceived to be effective in crime control. So, community members believed that vigilante groups should be given the responsibility to control crime and so on. Unfortunately, poor equipment, lack of adequate funding and training of the vigilante groups have rendered the efforts of the groups at crime control counterproductive in Enugu State.

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