

## Drowning Security Apparatus; the Nexus of a Failing State of Nigeria, Threats to Lives and Properties in Anambra State in Perspective

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### Abstract

### Review Article

Anambra State, Nigeria has become a hotbed of activities aggravated in the main by kidnapers, unknown-gunmen, cult related killings etc. The effects of these activities necessitate the problematic, as the state has become a flashpoint of incessant kidnaping, killings, loss of businesses and government owned properties and infrastructures worth several billions of Naira, if not in dollars within the space of one year. The above stances necessitated the need to x-ray Nigeria visa a viz Anambra state as a failing state. In the face of the current and numerous killings, hostage takings, destruction and burning of government owned properties etc, security presence notwithstanding. Hence the capacity of the state to exercise its constitutional assigned responsibility of protection of lives and properties of her citizenry remains in doubt. As the Nigerian security architect hardly secure and protect themselves in the face of these upheavals not to talk of her populace. In a bid to see the state of Nigeria which we proclaim, the Nigerian security forces are non-negotiable tools and agent of societal change and transformation, who can further be manipulated in the face of uncertainty against the state. It is in the light of the above that this paper employs a survey design, using secondary sources of data. It further engaged the combination of System and Structural Functionalism as its framework of analysis to reconnoiter the problematic. The paper concludes with a finding that sometimes the security agents are syndicates to the criminal elements that tear the corporate existence of Nigerian state in general, and Anambra state in particular. Thus recommends among others that grass root communication should be encouraged among the local people, and also re-orientation of the Anambra state security architecture on the oath of allegiance to their operational mechanism, even in the face of threat to lives and properties.

**Keywords:** Security, Security Apparatus, Insecurity, Failing State, Threats, Threats to Life.

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## INTRODUCTION

Scenarios abound to which we question the corporate existence of Nigeria, whether we can call Nigeria a failing state or a failed state. Scenario's like observed lapses in our security apparatus which have led to killings of people in their numbers, kidnapping of both low and people of high ranking status both political class, economic class, social class, etc. These observable phenomena constitute great threat to the corporate existence of Nigeria. The security as a system is setup to guard and protect the lives and properties of her citizens. The political class notwithstanding has so far withheld the security system of the nation for their selfish and personal interest.

Hence, cases of attacks, death and what we tend to call unknown yet appearing and ravaging our political system has led us to a state where we question

the capability and competence of the state machinery in ensuring that the basic constitutional rights of protection of lives and properties of her populace can still be enjoyed by them. A state of insecurity feared by the people and the weakness of the state security apparatus to decisively fight and cub these anomalies has posed threat to the corporate existence of the state, thus exhibits all indices, attributes and character of a failing state.

Despite the reorganizations and changes in the Anambra state security apparatus which includes redeployment of more security personnel, mass recruitment and involvement of both the local and community vigilantes etc resulting in change in the various offices and positions for example the appointment of new commissioner of police etc, the security apparatus of the state has been on a high diminishing line as they have failed to check mate and

curtail these series of attacks, kidnappings and killings, as such has also reduced the people's trust in their competence to protect their rights. It is expected that the security apparatus should be able to handle the cases of attacks, killings, kidnapping that has places the state in a chaotic position.

In view of the above, this paper engages the survey design, using secondary sources of data from Newspapers, Monographs, Journals etc to examine the climaxing insecurity in Anambra state, as posing serious threat to lives, properties, business and human relations, notwithstanding the existence and presence of security agencies like the Nigerian Police Force, DSS, Military, Civil Defense, Nigerian Immigration Service etc that are empowered by the constitution for such responsibilities.

### **Conceptualization of Concepts Security**

Security according to the Oxford dictionary means the state of being free from danger or threat. George-Genyi cited in Ikezue (2014), opined that security is the condition of feeling safe from harm or danger, the defiance, protection and preservation of values, and the absence of threats to acquire value. He added that security is about survival and the condition of human existence.

Baldwin (1997) defined security astutely as a low probability of damage to acquired values. Similarly, Krause and Nye (1975) sees security as the absence of acute threats to the minimal acceptable levels of the basic values that a people consider essential to its survival. Based on the definitions above, security cannot be said to be functional if the safety of one's values cannot be guaranteed. It is in this sense that the Kampala document on security cited in George - Genyi (2013) clearly states.

"The concept of security goes beyond military consideration. It embraces economic, political and social dimensions of individual, family, community, local and national life. The security of a nation must be construed in terms of the security of the individual citizen to live in peace with access to basic necessities of life while fully participating in the affairs of his/her society in freedom and enjoying all fundamental human rights (Genyi, 2013, P 60).

This paper will adopt the definition of George Genyi because it recognizes the place of the citizens and their safety, paramount in state. It captures the fact that security system in a state should be constructed in regards to the protection of lives and properties of her citizens. States succeed or fail according to their performance which in turn refers to the levels of their effective delivery of the most crucial and fundamental needs of the people and one of these is security. This security should cover political, economic, social life of the people. Anything short of these constitutes a threat

to the survival of the people. Furthermore, the state should employ and use certain apparatus/operative to ensure that the lives and properties of the people are guaranteed.

### **Threat to Security**

It is no new thing in Anambra state to hear that duties of state constitutionally certified security apparatus (Police, DSS, Civil Defense, Military, NIS etc) are now carried out by volunteered vigilante groups. This is in consonance with the drowning state of these state security operatives to maintain peace and order.

### **According to Iwuamadi (2012)**

"Anambra state was among the first in the southeast region to experience the gradual take-over of security by vigilante groups following the failure of state security agencies to provide security as armed robbers and other criminal activities virtually took over control of key commercial centres and towns like Onitsha, Oko, Nnewi, and Awka the state capital.

Emphasis cannot be overlaid on the deteriorating level of security in Anambra state. This security challenges does not just affect the poor masses or average Anambra resident but also even to law maker. For instance the kidnapping of a member of the Anambra state house of assembly, Dr Okechukwu Okoye representing Aguata 2 state constituency alongside his campaign director Cyril Chiegboka (Sahara reporters, May 19, 2022), less than twelve hours, five persons were kidnapped by gunmen in Akpo community, Aguata LGA on their way back from a traditional marriage ceremony of a cousin to Anambra state commissioner for special duties Sly Ezeokenwa (Ugwu, 2022), the kidnap of the traditional ruler of Ogwaniocha community of Ogbaru L.G.A, Kidnap of Igwe Robert Eze of Ukpo in Dunkofia local government area, the kidnap of the Prelate of the Methodist Church of Nigeria Mr Samuel Kanu-Uche, and two other priests etc.

There have also been cases of unknown gun men who wield fire-arms and causes havoc in the state. These unknown men in Ihiala, Nnewi, Onitsha, , Awka and it likes has taken part in the death of over hundreds of innocent lives and yet have remained unknown behind the mask. These havocs have continued amidst numerous security agencies in the state that often remains unreachable in the discharge of their duties, because of the fear of the unknown, hence are characterized as incapacitated and incompetent.

According to Nwadinobi (2013), insecurity is caused by several factors in different nations. In Nigeria, unemployment, poverty, drug abuse, greed, quest to get rich quick among others have been identified as causes of insecurity. A number of factors

contribute to the causes of insecurity in Anambra state which are itemized below:

### **Causes of Insecurity in Anambra State**

It has been observed and stated that unemployment, unequal distribution of resources, presence of thieves and pickpockets in major markets, drug abuse and quest for fast money were the major causes of insecurity and kidnapping in Anambra state. Other causes include proliferation of vigilante groups, poverty among the citizens, corruption and lack of contentment. This finding is consistent with the views of Okorodudu (2006) and Obiozor (2011) who expressed that one of the effects of unemployment in Nigeria is increase in crime and insecurity. This finding is also consistent with Ada (2009), Anwulora (2009) and Umeagbalasi (2010) who considered the gap of unequal distribution of resources among the citizenry as the reason for political insecurity. Umeagbalasi (2010) recognized value system crisis and quest for fast material wealth acquisition as well as proliferation of vigilante groups and institutionalization of gun - culture are some of the causes of insecurity in Anambra state. In the light of the observation of scholars, causes of threat to security in Anambra state are;

#### **1. Uncontrolled Possession of Fire Arms**

This should seriously be put into consideration. The fire arms brandished and used for attacks, how are they gotten, where and who are they suppliers? The unknown gun-men crises in Anambra state can be check-mated if possession of fire arms is seriously looked into.

#### **2. High Proliferation of Vigilante Groups**

The vigilante groups are brainchild of town union or community effort sometimes, extends their bounds. Although vigilante groups have helped in checking activities of criminals, they in many cases also constitute a threat to security of ordinary citizens. They could be bypassed by rich and powerful persons in society and used to terrorize members of the public. These days with the high level of insecurity, they could arrest, detain and execute judgment best to them rather than handing over the suspect's to the police in the security and governance of the state. Example of this is the trend where vigilante groups set caught criminals on fire. Cases of this have reported in Awka, Onitsha etc.

#### **Failing state**

The benchmark on which generally a state is measured is based on three core functions; representation, security and a concern for welfare of its population. The unceasing violence and erupting threats of war has posed a great question, if the state has failed in its primary responsibility of providing security or is on the part of becoming failed.

According to Johanna Moritz (2013), states are considered failed when they are consumed by internal

violence and cease delivering positive political goods to their inhabitants. For Robert, the primary public good is the provision of security within a territory. Once this good is provided a number of other goods can evolve such as for example settlement of dispute, rule of law, political participation, education, health etc. Based on this, violence is quirky for failed state.

On the same line of argument, Robert - Dorff (2007) noted that state failure need not be reserved for cases of complete state collapse, either into anarchy or civil war but can also be understood as a process's involving the weakening of a state's capacity to provide legitimate governance. Such a case has been witnessed here in Anambra state. A scenario where the government gives laws and orders and also laws and orders made by some non-state actors, and the people chooses to obey the informal and non-state actors rather than the governments, cases of the Monday sit a home (Mark, Obi & Oham, 2022).

According to Potter (2004), by using a state's responsibility, a model can be developed that enable states to be defined and categorized as weak, failing or failed.

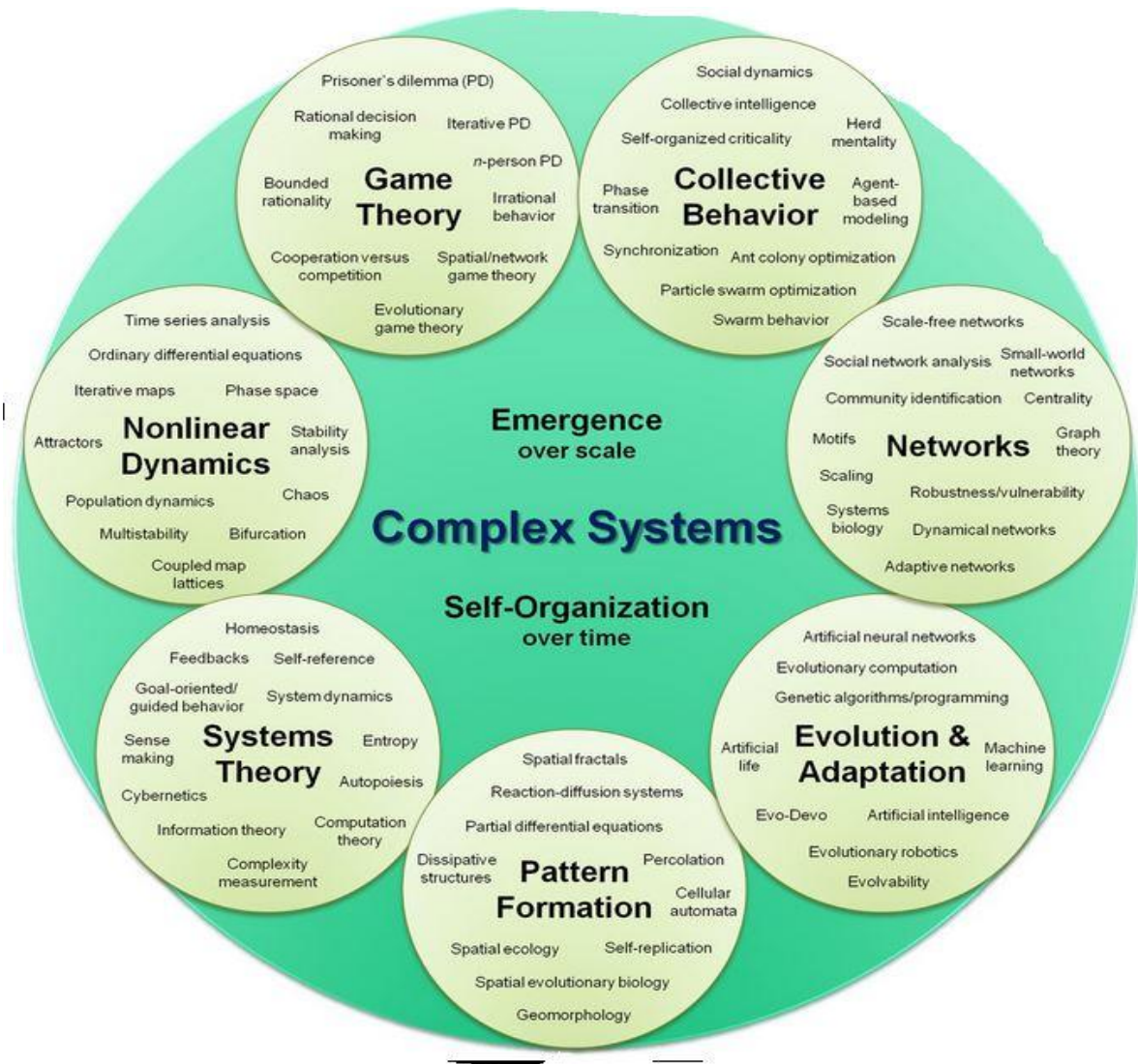
#### **Theoretical framework**

This study will adopts a combination of the systems theory and the structural functionalism in this discuss.

Systems theory was first introduced in the 1940s by biologist Ludwig von Bertalanffy and furthered by W. Ross Ashby and George Bateson. Bertalanffy initially argued for open systems as opposed to the more closed systems associated with classical science.

Systems theory is the interdisciplinary study of systems, i.e. cohesive groups of interrelated, interdependent parts that can be natural or human-made. Every system is bounded by space and time, influenced by its environment, defined by its structure and purpose, and expressed through its functioning. A system may be more than the sum of its parts if it expresses synergy or emergent behavior. Changing one part of a system may affect other parts or the whole system. It may be possible to predict these changes in patterns of behavior. For systems that learn and adapt, the growth and the degree of adaptation depend upon how well the system is engaged with its environment. Some systems support other systems, maintaining the other system to prevent failure (wikipedia).

Effectiveness of the entire system is measured and evaluated by the effectiveness, efficiency and productivity of all component units. Hence, once a part is found faulty it has a measure of setback on the entire system



According to Easton's behavioral approach to politics, proposed that a political system could be seen as a delimited (i.e. all political systems have precise boundaries) and fluid (changing) system of steps in decision making. Simplifying this model; Political system works within an environment. The environment generates different demands from different section of society such as reservation system in the matter of a certain group demand etc. David Easton (1953) sees the political system as a structure that process's and regulates interaction within the state.

Step 1, Changes in the social or physical environment surrounding a political system produce "demands" and "supports" for action or the status quo directed as "inputs" towards the political system, through political behavior.

Step 2, these demands and supporting groups stimulate competition in a political system, leading to decisions or "outputs" directed at some aspect of the surrounding social or physical environment.

Step 3, after a decision or output is made (e.g., a specific policy), it interacts with its environment, and if

it produces change in the environment, there are "outcomes."

Step 4, when a new policy interacts with its environment, outcomes may generate new demands or supports and groups in support or against the policy ("feedback") or a new policy on some related matter.

Step 5, feedback, leads back to Step 1, forming a never-ending cycle (Wikipedia).

On the other hand, Structural functionalism, or simply functionalism, is "a framework that sees society as a complex system whose parts work together to promote solidarity and stability". Gabriel Almond and Bingham Powell introduced structural-functionalist approach to comparing political systems in 1970s. They argued that, in order to understand a political system, it is necessary to understand not only its institutions (or structures) but also their respective functions. Functionalism addresses society as a whole in terms of the function of its constituent elements; namely norms, customs, traditions, and institutions. They also insisted that these institutions, to be properly understood, must

be placed in a meaningful and dynamic historical context (Wikipedia).

In the light of the above, Structural functionalism sees society as a complex system whose parts work together to promote solidarity. This theory focuses on different structures of the society eg, Police, DSS, Army, Judiciary, Executive etc and the functions assigned to these structures. Effectiveness of every structure and performance of it function helps to maintain and develop the state.

In applying these theories to the problematic, it can be seen clearly the reason behind the alarming rate of insecurity in Anambra state is traced to the fact that different structures in Anambra state has clearly failed in their duties, responsibility and functions assigned to them in ensuring the peaceful existence of her citizenry. This also calls for a total overhauling of the Anambra state polity.

The emanation of insecurity in Anambra state clearly did not start with what it is now. It can be said that the frustration of the perpetrators over time has accumulated to state where their aggression become visible and manifesting in different form. This is evidently clear where the insecurity crisis has led to the disruption of other structures. For example, insecurity in Anambra state has led to economic disruption of business, movement and others. Even the recent curfew placed on some part of the state by the Governor with effect from 26th May, 2022 from 6am to 6pm on tricycles, motorcycles and shuttle buses in Aguata, Ihiala, Ekwusigo, Nnewi north and south, Ogbaru and Orumba north and south, along side the incessant Mondays sit a home.

### Elements of a Failing State

Rotberg (2017) argued that failed states, collapsed states, weak states, causes and indicators, "there is a predictable measure of such security breach, when a government can no longer provide predictable, recognizable, systematized methods of adjudicating disputes and regulating both the norms and the prevailing norms of particular society or Polity.

In support of Rotberg (2017) position of falling state, on Friday, 29<sup>th</sup> April 2022 at about 8:30 p.m. gun men raided Uto Ndu Beer drinking joint 'in Obiofia village in Osumenyi, in the Nnewi-South Local Government Area of Anambra State and killed five persons. The gunmen invaded the restaurant at about 8:30pm and immediately opened fire on the customers who were drinking and having fun. About five of them, including the owner of the restaurant, identified as Uto Ndu, were said to have been killed (Ugwu, 2022),

According to an Eye witness Ikechukwu Enyi, a resident of the area noted that the gunmen opened fire on some persons drinking in a beer parlour. In his

words "I could not get so close to count the corpses, but they were up to five persons (that were killed)," Another resident preferred to be identified as anonymous added that the gunmen have been killing people in the area, but authorities appear to be silent.

On Sunday, May 22, 2022, witnessed the gruesome killing in cold blood, of Harira Jibril, a 32-year-old pregnant woman, and her four children; Fatima, Khadijah, Hadiza, and Zaituna, who were nine, seven, five and two years old respectively, allegedly by suspected members of the proscribed Indigenous People of Biafra, at Isulo, Orumba North Local Government Area of Anambra State

It was on the above note that State of Emergency GBV Movement appalled by the continued acts of reckless killings across the country. Noted that we are more worried that groups of outlaws operate so freely without any effective security measures to protect the lives and livelihoods of Nigerians and bring the perpetrators of violence to book. How has society degenerated into a state of wanton killing of an unborn baby, infants, and their innocent mother? (Oloniniran, 2022)

The SoEGBV Movement further added that "It is worrisome, the normalization of these attacks, given their frequency. Where is the outrage? How do we move on after our fellow citizens are murdered, in this case, a pregnant woman and her children? Nigeria is unsafe, North, South, East, and West, and we will continue to witness unbridled criminality and loss of lives engineered by outlaw groups who have elected to plunge the nation into anarchy unless the government takes a break from electioneering and takes decisive action. We call on well-meaning Nigerians to raise their voices in condemnation of the atrocities of these groups.

"The SoEGBV Movement demands urgent actions by the security agencies and government officials to apprehend the criminals responsible for the death of Harira and her kids. These deaths further damage our already fragile national fault line, and if nothing is done to arrest and punish the perpetrators, it will only fuel cycle of violence."

The group noted that the Federal Government must proactively and commensurately tackle criminal and terrorist groups to halt their activities and keep all Nigerians safe.

"We demand that security agencies scale up their responsibilities and become more proactive in their duties. The failure of our security system contributes to the needless loss of lives and properties. Those behind the untimely death of Harira, Fatima, Khadijah, Hadiza, Zaituna, and the unborn child must not go unpunished," it concluded.

*Moreso, In the words of (Obianeri, 2022) "kidnapping and subsequent murder of the lawmaker representing the Aguata II constituency in the Anambra State House of Assembly, Dr Okechukwu Okoye, by unknown gunmen are indications of lawlessness the state has descended into"*

On Sunday, May 15, 2022, the lawmaker representing Aguta II in the Anambra state House of Assembly, Dr. Okechukwu. Okoye, popularly known as "Okey Di Okay," and his Campaign Director, Mr. Cyril Chiegboka, were kidnapped within his community by un-identified assailants while returning from a function. They were immediately taken away inside his black Sienna car within his constituency.

The Nigeria Police Command, through the Public Relations Officer, DSP Tochukwu Ikenga, confirmed the incident, until the following Saturday, 21<sup>st</sup> May, 2022, when the lawmaker's freshly cut head and that of his aide were mounted at the Chisco Park in the Amichi community Amichi in Nnewi South Local Government Area, Anambra State, with a written note placed on the side.

The handwritten note had messages signed by 'unknown gunmen', one of which read, "We give the politicians 48 hours to withdraw all the soldiers in Biafra land or face our wrath or consequences unknown gunmen. His headless corpse allegedly lying along Nnobi-Ideani Road

Within the same week, a headless body was found on the Nnobi-Alor-Nkpor road, attack at Onitsha Tollgate, Ogbunike/Nkwelle Junction, attack around Eke Adazi Nnukwu, attack at Ogidi, attack at Aforigwe, Umunnachi, attack around Oraukwu-Abatete, attack on Agulu, attack at Nanka.

Obianeri, (2022) further noted that in all of these, the lawmaker's death has taken centre stage among the growing concerns in the state. This is more so because lawmakers are seen as "sacred" and "untouchable" because of their function in society. "If a lawmaker could be killed without any traces, what then is the fate of the common man," remains a question that begs for an answer.

Grace Ogah, an Indegene of Aguata LGA lamented that she is still coming to terms with how somebody, who is not just an ordinary individual could be kidnapped, beheaded and his head displayed and videotaped, and nothing happened. The executive governor of Anambra state Prof. Chalres Chukwuma Soludo, lamented that the lawmaker's killing meant that "criminals have desecrated our land" and showed that criminals don't value human lives anymore.

In addition to the above, Elekweke, (2022) noted that less than 24 hours after killing of the

lawmaker "Hon. Okechukwu Okoye" unknown gunmen On Friday evening, 20th of May, 2022 at about 5:50 pm laid siege along the road of Ugwumba Bus Stop, in search of the owner of a Lexus Rx330 who allegedly succeeded in escaping from his car. "The Lexus owner quickly alighted from the car after driving it into the gutter at Ugwumba Bus stop and ran into Ezechibuike's home, that situates around the bus stop, through which he fled. However, the unidentified gunmen said to be numbering more than ten on arrival at the bus stop discovered that the owner of the car had left, so they laid siege to Ugwumba bus stop for an upward duration of an hour and commanded all the road users to lie face down while they were busy conducting search of the Lexus owner."

Indigenes of Igboukwu and Unubi in the diaspora were advised not to be in a hurry to return to the village. An indigene of Ezinifitte, in same local government area, said youths had deserted the community for fear of being forcefully conscripted into armed gangs.

Further, on May 29, 2022, the prelate of the Methodist Church Nigeria, His Eminence Samuel Uche, and the Bishop of Methodist Church, Owerri Diocese and the Prelate's chaplain, were kidnapped along the Enugu-Port Harcourt expressway in Umunneochi Local Government Area of Abia State. However, the kidnapped victims were released on Monday, May 30, 2022, barely 24 hours after their abduction after the church's faithful had risen N100 million, ransom demanded by the abductors.

Similarly, on Tuesday April 23<sup>rd</sup> 2019, a former Anambra State lawmaker, Anthony Igboka, was killed by gunmen at the Oye Nimo round-about, Njikoka LGA, Anambra State. Some leaders of Nimo community, who on condition of anonymity, said Igboka must have been killed by cultists terrorising the community, whose activities he was trying to stamp out. One of the leaders said, "His killing has nothing to do with chieftaincy issue in our community. His killing should rather be attributed to a running battle with the bad boys in the town. Those boys were jubilant the night he was killed. Without Igboka, the cult boys would have overrun the town long ago (Okafor, 2019).

The above scenario neatly captures the current state of misdemeanors in Awka, the capital city of Anambra state, orchestrated by the activities of gun battle between cult groups. This has also become a challenge threatening the residents of Awka, Anambra state in recent times.

Almost all parts of the state are experiencing it, in one way or another over the years. From September 2021 to May 2022 for instance, not lesser than 120 persons have lost their lives to cult related killings, many either kidnapped or sustain injuries in

different parts of the state. No day that passes without hearing the killing of one or more persons especially the youths by rival cult group. All these happenstances in the very face, location, and domain of the headquarters of most of the security outfit in the state. eg Nigerian Prison Service, State Police, DSS, Anti-robbery etc.

In conclusion, the Owo Sunday shootings left nothing to be desired of Nigeria. In the words of Mr. Peter Obi: What happened in Owo today again adds to my position that our country is fast becoming a failed state.

#### **According to him:**

All must now join hands in saving our country from this existential situation we find ourselves in today. I sympathise with the victims' families, the Catholic Diocese of Ondo, the people and the Government of Ondo State. I urge the Federal Government and Ondo State Government to do whatever is possible to ensure that perpetrators of the dastardly act are brought to book.

#### **Measures to Check-mate Insecurity in Anambra State**

##### **1. Grassroot Communication**

Communication is essential in any system or Polity. The inability of the security apparatus to successfully track down and track out insecurity issues in the state can be linked to the disconnectedness of the operative towards the people they claim to protect.

Oraniaka (2021), identified the importance of community leaders and youths in playing prominent roles in the safeguarding of lives of people within their territories. This is because they know the people within their domain and in a better position to identify and deal with security challenges in their areas. Their significance cannot be over emphasized on local intelligence to tackle security challenges in the state.

##### **2. Skillful Training of Security Operatives**

In this regard, attention should be paid to steps for recruiting personnel. How are these men recruited? What is the level of their morale? How they are combatly trained? If these questions are carefully examined, security operatives like the police will not find it tough confronting any state of threat when they arise.

##### **3. Systematic Gathering of Intelligence Report**

We cannot fight what we don't know or call unknown unless it be unmasked. For any insecurity issues to be challenged we must know how it started, why it started and the support behind such agitation. The government through its machinery should carry out a systematic gathering of intelligence. This will aid the security apparatus know what they are up against and how to carry out their operation at ensuring insecurity free atmosphere.

A careful look at the above stated, could explain the reason behind the failed strategies adopted in the past to fight insecurity. The people of Anambra state should be free to communicate cases of insecurity instead of bottling them up. It's also important that the information be communicated to the state machinery in charge of combating insecurity. Furthermore, they should be right intelligence gathering on the part of the security apparatus before embarking or attacking any situation. This is to avoid mass loss of lives of the security operatives.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. There should be a total overhauling and restructuring of the Anambra state polity through the policy and programs of the state government, aimed at massive job creation, youth empowerments and skill acquisitions. This policy should be backed up by strong executing bodies to ensure successful implementation.
2. Grassroot support and communication should be encouraged among the local people. It should be noted that local intelligence will help combat insecurity, as only law enforcement agencies may not fight these melanoma alone.
3. Re-orientation of the Anambra state security operatives on their oath of allegiance to their operational mechanism, even in the face of threat to lives and properties, while ensuring adequate motivation on the morals of the security personnel in the State.

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