

# The Multiplicity of Law Enforcement Agencies and the State of Law and Order in Nigeria: A Case of too many Cooks?

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**Abstract:** *Efficient law enforcement depends on the quality and outlook of the institutions and personnel saddled with this responsibility. There are several agencies in Nigeria created for the purpose of law enforcement. Despite the multiplicity of these agencies, however, the country is still far from being a reflection of a society where security and orderliness are being maintained. The essence of this paper is to explore the law-enforcement terrain of the country with a view to ascertaining the state of affairs vis-a-vis the existing law enforcement agencies, their functional relevance, and general impact on the society in terms of maintenance of law and order. Findings reveal that the state of security and maintenance of law and order is still abysmally low in spite of the fact that there exist several law enforcement agencies within the country. The main recommendation is that instead of placing emphasis on creating more and more law enforcement agencies, which sometimes amount to duplication of functions, efforts should be made to reorganize, streamline and strengthen the existing institutions.*

**Keywords:** Law enforcement, Inter-agency collaboration, insecurity, human rights abuse

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Every society is guided by laws, which regulate the actions of individuals living within the society. Left to obey the laws as a matter of choice, the tendency is high for individuals to break them at will. As such, the existence of laws and code of conduct are not sufficient conditions for the enthronement of security and orderliness within the society. Achieving these objectives requires setting up the necessary machinery to regulate human activity as it relates to adherence to existing laws. Hence, governments set up law-enforcement institutions saddled with the responsibility of ensuring compliance to the laws. To this extent, one can rightly say that law enforcement is sine qua non for the maintenance of orderliness and security within the society.

Law enforcement agencies exist in all the countries of the world. However, it is quite agreeable that the state of security, peace, and orderliness in the different countries are not the same. The reason behind this variation borders on the fact that the agencies in the different societies differ in their operation, level of efficiency, level of effectiveness, and in terms of their environment. For instance, a law enforcement outfit populated by well-trained officials and provided with adequate operational tools and equipment is more likely to exhibit a higher level of efficiency than the one that lacks those features.

Nigeria can boast of numerous law-enforcement agencies that cover various spheres of life. Some of the agencies of the federal government involved in law enforcement in Nigeria include the Nigerian Police Force (NPF), Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC), State Security Services (SSS) also known as the Department of State Services (DSS), Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), etc. The National Assembly

has also passed the Nigeria Peace Corps Bill. The passing of the Bill, which took place quite recently (precisely in July, 2017), was aimed at establishing (or rather legalising) another agency known as the Nigerian Peace Corps. From Nwafor's (2017) reports, the Federal Government is equally contemplating the establishment of another security agency to be known as National Guard. This is despite the fact that this agency was originally set up in 1993 but later collapsed (Daily Post, 2017). Aside the federal agencies, the State governments have their law enforcement agencies that operate within such spheres as traffic and waste management. Added to these, there are recognised private outfits that assist in law enforcement such as Vigilante groups and community policing outfits.

Despite the prevalence of law enforcement agencies in Nigeria, the country is still characterized by high level of insecurity and disorderliness. News about incidents of crime, which remain unresolved in most cases, abound. Driving through Nigerian roads exposes one to bare cases of disorderliness. As Odumosu (2017, p. 115) rightly observed, there is pervasive lawlessness in Nigeria as "most Nigerians are unbridled, unruly, unrestrained, and illegal in their day-to-day life and activities". In fact, lawlessness seems to have become part of the national life. More often than not, it appears as if the law enforcement agents have been overwhelmed by the issues they were meant to guard the society against. In the light of the numerous law-enforcement agencies and the poor state of security and orderliness in Nigeria, one is compelled to believe that the country's law enforcement agencies are far from being efficient and that the approach the government usually adopts towards making things better is to create more law-enforcement outfits. Is it likely that the solution to the problem of ineffectiveness of the law-enforcement agencies in Nigeria lies in creating more agencies? That is to say, can one say that the reason the country has not attained a

satisfactory level of security and orderliness is because she is yet to have the right number of law-enforcement agencies? Or, are the existing agencies likely to perform better if they are strengthened towards achieving the desired objectives? In response to these and other related questions, this paper appraises the impact of the law-enforcement agencies on the Nigerian society vis-a-vis the state of law and order.

This paper adopts mainly the qualitative mechanisms in generating and analysing data. Documentary evidence and observational instrument form the main source of data collection, which are analysed with the relevant interpretative skills. The paper is divided into different parts starting with the introduction. The second part establishes the theoretical foundation upon which the study rests. While Part Three explores the history of the major law enforcement agencies in Nigeria, Part Four reviews the orientation and character of Nigerian law enforcement agents. Part Five appraises the state of law and order in Nigeria vis-a-vis the Multiplicity of law enforcement agencies. Part six concludes the study.

## **2. THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE**

The Systems model of change and the Organizational Development perspective fall within the Planned Change Approach. In line with the general systems theory, which sees a system as an assemblage of parts that must be viewed as a whole (Sapru, 2013), the former lays emphasis on interdependence. Hence, an organization is treated as a set of interacting variables, all of which are likely to need to change together (Rollinson, 2008). According to French and Bell (1999), Organizational Development is a planned, systematic process in which applied behavioural science principles and practices are introduced into organisations, towards the goal of increasing individual and organisational effectiveness. By implication, the Systems model of change is to a large extent integrated into this approach.

In discussing Organizational Development, Rollinson (2013) captures it as an approach that deals with fundamental and transformational changes and thus deemphasizes the ad hoc or quick-fix solutions to problems. According to him, the basic tenet of Organizational Development approach is that organization is a system of sub-systems and, as such, is strongly concerned with identifying the multitude of simultaneous changes that may need to be made within the organization. Again, the Organizational Development not only sets out to achieve a better functioning organization but also focuses on the process of change. The understanding here is that how change takes place plays a significant role in determining whether the objective of a more effective organization is likely to be realised. In sum, the Organizational Development approach underscores the possibility of making an existing organization operate more effectively by initiating changes in the desired direction. Guided by this approach, it may not therefore make sense to embark on

establishing a new organization in a bid to overcome the challenges posed by the operational anomalies and poor performance of a similar existing organization.

The Organizational Development perspective is apt in analysing the issue of multiplicity of law enforcement agencies vis-a-vis the current chaotic state of law and order within the country. To the extent that the prevalence of law enforcement agencies have not helped in enhancing the effectiveness of the law enforcement, the need to apply an alternative approach becomes necessary and this calls for the approach that emphasizes the strengthening of existing agencies towards the realization of the objectives of law enforcement.

## **3. BRIEF HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE MAJOR LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES IN NIGERIA**

Scholarly discourses point to the fact that mechanisms for the maintenance of law and order existed in those traditional societies that were eventually colonised to form Nigeria (Biereenu-Nnabugwu, 2015; Yecho, 2015). However, the structures for law enforcement within the different ethnic nationalities were not the same. Whereas there were regular formations dedicated to the performance of this task in some areas, there were other areas that had no standing establishment in this regard and as such had to draw individuals from age grades, cults or other social groups to deal with the challenges of social control and law enforcement whenever the need arose. In all, the mechanisms and structures for law enforcement that existed in the traditional societies had to give way to a more organised and uniform system with the advent of colonialism.

The journey towards having modern law enforcement outfits in Nigeria began with the emergence of the British imperialists in the areas that eventually became Nigeria. Colonialism was borne out of the desire of the imperialists to satisfy their selfish interests (Okechukwu, 2015). Upon the termination of slave trade and the emergence of the industrial era, the interest of the British capitalists dwelt on commercial activities bordering on acquisition of raw materials like palm produce, groundnuts, cocoa, rubber, etc. As observed by Yecho (2015), the new emphasis on legitimate commerce increased points of contacts as well as conflict between the foreign and African middlemen/traders. Also, the arrival of Christian missionaries became another source of serious clash of interests between the foreigners and the local people. Indeed, all these raised problems that call for law enforcement. In a bid to impose their will over the local people and have control of the situation, maintenance of law and order (as dictated by the foreigners) formed part of the primary policy of the colonialists and as such law enforcement outfit had to be created.

As can be gleaned from documentary evidence, the police force was the first agency for social control and law

enforcement created by the colonialists (Biereenu-Nnabugwu, 2015; Aderinto, 2014; Don, 2014; Akani, 2014; Alemika, 2003; Asenime, 2014). According to Adoyin and Agwanwo (2015), the police in Nigeria came at the instance of the colonial authority in order to ensure acceptance of the new order as well as enforce the regulations it introduced. From the account of the Network on Police Reform in Nigeria (cited in Aderinto, 2014 p.61) the move towards the establishment of the Nigerian police force began even prior to the formal annexation of Lagos, hence, "In 1860, British colonial authorities created a 30-member Consular Guard in Lagos as the first organised policing unit for the territory which eventually became Nigeria". It is not surprising therefore that this desire to have a force formed one of the top priority as soon as the annexation took place. According to Bieerenu-Nnabugwu (2015, p. 9), "The establishment of police force...dates back to 1861 when the British government, after so much pressure by Macosky, then acting governor, finally gave approval for its establishment. It was, however, police ordinance 10 of 1895 that fully established the civil police force in Nigeria". It stands to reason, therefore, that the Nigerian police was formed through a gradual process that began during the colonial period and it was this colonial police that transformed into the Nigerian Police Force when independence was granted.

There are clear indications that the Nigerian army share the same historical roots with the Nigerian police. Both can be said to have originated from the same source and only metamorphosed into different branches along the line. While presenting the history of the Nigerian police, Aderinto (2014) made mention of the various forces formed by the colonialists in Nigeria such as the Hausa Guard, Niger Coast Constabulary, etc. In discussing the origin and development of the Nigerian Army, Ndoh (1997) equally traced it to the various forces formed by the colonial administration that, inter alia, include the Lagos Constabulary and the Niger Coast Constabulary. According to him, the initial desire was to raise the Niger Coast Protectorate Force as a purely military Force. But in view of the fact that this required an act of the British Parliament to take effect, the Force was raised instead as a constabulary. It is worthy to note that these forces were charged with both military and police duties at the initial stage. Ndoh (1997) further posited that a body known as *Hausa Force* was carved out of the Lagos Constabulary in 1895 to perform exclusive military duties while the remnant of the Constabulary performed exclusive police duties. It was this Hausa Force that later became the Lagos Battalion in 1901 and along with the Northern Regiment and Southern Regiment were incorporated into the West African Frontier Force (WAFF). At independence, which occurred in 1960, Nigeria inherited the army that was put in place by the colonialists. In fact, "even though there was a formal handing over of the control of the army to Nigeria, a British officer continued to be the commanding officer of the army until 1964 when the Nigerian officers

emerged dominant within the officers corps in the army" (Ndoh, 1997, p.5). It can be seen, therefore, that the two forces (the police and the army) were created within the colonial era and inherited by the country at independence.

Following the assassination of the former military Head of State, General Murtala Muhammed, in a failed coup d'etat, the Nigerian government under the military regime headed by General Olusegun Obasanjo formed the National Security Organisation (NSO) under Decree number 27 of 1976 and this agency was saddled with various responsibilities such as the detection and prevention of any crime against the security of the state, protection of classified materials, and carrying out any other security missions assigned by the president. The NSO functioned as an agency for about ten years before it was dissolved in 1986 and restructured into three different organisations by the Babangida-led administration. These organisations include the State Security Service (SSS), also known as the Department of State Services (DSS); the National Intelligence Agency (NIA); and the Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA). The SSS serves as the primary domestic intelligence agency of the country with the responsibility of intelligence-gathering within the country and the protection of senior government officials such as the president and the State governors. On the other hand, the NIA handles external intelligence and counter intelligence while the DIA handles military-related intelligence both inside and outside Nigeria ([https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/National\\_Security\\_Organisation](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Security_Organisation)).

From the work of Odum (2016), it can be gleaned that the Federal Government created the National Road Safety Commission in 1974 in an attempt to establish a formalised structure for traffic management and streamline the rules and regulations for traffic offences. This commission appeared not to have lived up to its expectations. Hence, the Federal Military Government established the Federal Road Safety Commission in 1988 with the backing of Decree 45. The main responsibilities of the Commission include preventing or minimizing accidents on the highway; designing and producing the driver's license; the standardization of highway traffic codes; etc (<http://frsc.gov.ng/about-us/what-we-do>).

The Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps is one of the security and law enforcement-related agencies that operate in the country. Following the outbreak of the Nigeria-Biafra war, the Lagos Civil Defence Committee was set up with the aim of sensitizing and protecting the civil populace through such means as educating them about the war and how to take precautions in the event of an attack. As the name implies, its sphere of influence covers only Lagos – the then Federal Capital Territory. By 1970, it transformed from the Lagos Civil Defence Committee to the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps. The organization became recognised as a national security outfit in 1984 and, following a major restructuring that took place in 1988, Commands were established at all the states of the federation

as well as the Federal Capital Territory. The organization got statutory backing in 2003 when the National Assembly passed an Act that was eventually signed into law by the President. The Act was further amended in 2007 to enhance its statutory duties (see [www.nscdc.gov.ng](http://www.nscdc.gov.ng)).

The National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) was established by the federal government with Decree number 48 of January 1990. This occurred at a point the country witnessed a dramatic rise in the trafficking and selling of hard drugs and whereupon the drug barons and traffickers engage in ostentatious display of their drug-related wealth. The responsibility of the NDLEA include tackling the growing, processing, manufacturing, and selling of hard drugs as well as targeting the leaders of narcotics and money laundering organisations ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National\\_Drug\\_Law\\_Enforcement\\_Agency](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Drug_Law_Enforcement_Agency)).

Against the backdrop of notoriety gained by Nigeria within the international community in relation to her records on corruption, the Federal Government came up with the Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Act 2000. It was based on this Act that the Federal Government set up and inaugurated the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission on September 29th, 2000, for the purposes of tackling corruption in a more decisive manner. The Commission is empowered to receive complaints about corrupt individuals and investigate and prosecute them (<http://icpc.gov.ng/icpc-history/>).

The Federal Government also established the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) in 2003 to tackle crimes related to Advanced Free Fraud (popularly known as 419 in the country), money laundering, and acquisition of illicit wealth generally ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economic\\_and\\_Financial\\_Crimes\\_Commission](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economic_and_Financial_Crimes_Commission)). Aside these major agencies, there are other ones established by the government at the federal, state, and local government levels at one point or the other with the aim of enforcing law in either a general or specialised area. Examples include the Kano state Hisbah Corps, the defunct Bakassi Boys in Anambra State, Lagos State Traffic Management Agency (LASTMA), Enugu State Waste Management Agency (ENSWAMA), Vehicle Inspection Office (VIO) established by the various states of the federation, etc. Currently, the plan to establish the Nigerian Peace Corps (NPC) is underway and has gotten to its final stage. Already, the National Assembly has passed the bill for the establishment of this organisation but the presidential assent is still being awaited. It appears however that the president has decided to withhold assent and some members of the National Assembly are threatening to override the presidential veto on the matter (Umoru, 2018).

#### 4. THE ORIENTATION AND CHARACTER OF NIGERIAN LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENTS

It has been noted already in this work that the history of modern law enforcement in Nigeria can be traced

to the colonial era and this began with the creation of such institutions as the police and the army. The three basic points that characterize the institution for law enforcement established by the colonialists, as highlighted by Asenime (2014), can be summarized in the following terms: (a) it served the purpose of achieving the colonial conquest of the Nigerian peoples, (b) it employed violence in the process of conquest, and (c) it served as an instrument for the sustenance of British domination over the indigenous peoples. It is against this backcloth that Yecho (2015) asserts that the hallmark of colonial policing was pacification and suppression of the indigenous communities in order to serve the interests of the colonial masters. Allen (2014) aligns with this viewpoint by describing the colonial law enforcement agents as being brutal and notoriously repressive in approach.

Commenting on the army established by the colonial masters, Odumegwu-Ojukwu (1989, p.31) states thus: "In training, the Nigerian army was totally alienated from the Nigerian Society. It was a weapon closely guarded by the agents of imperialism to be unleashed whenever necessary on the native population". According to him, the criterion for judging the excellence of that force during the period was its ability to serve the whims and caprices of the agents of imperialism. It was based on this orientation that a Nigerian soldier would proudly display medals he won in the process of conquering his own village, which entailed killing his own relatives and close friends. By implication, the colonial law-enforcement institutions were effectively alienated from the indigenous peoples on whose soil they were operating. As captured by Odum (2016), these colonial officials saw the indigenous peoples not just as natives but as *bloody natives* and upon the departure of the colonial masters, the security and law enforcement officials retained the derogatory 'bloody' appellation and resorted to calling the ordinary citizens *bloody civilians*. It is therefore necessary to point out that it was not only the foreign officials that alienated themselves from the local people. The local people recruited into this establishment equally got themselves detached and alienated from the rest of their fellow citizens. In sum, the colonial law-enforcement agents were not concerned with serving and protecting the citizens within their immediate environment. They were rather committed to serving British interests.

As rightly observed by Yecho (2015, p.23), it was the expectations of people that, upon the granting of independence, the indigenous government would overhaul the structure set up by the colonial masters and establish a people-oriented police geared towards treating citizens with dignity. In his words, "these expectations were however dashed as the post-colonial government merely inherited the 'form' and 'content' of the colonial administration with more emphasis on law and order approach of its predecessor". It is in this same vein that Biereenu-Nnabugwu and Chukwujama (2014, p. 35) assert that "there was STRUCTURAL transfer of the Nigerian police from the British without



FUNCTIONAL reform". In effect, the orientation and character of law-enforcement institutions in Nigeria continued to bear marks of its colonial heritage even within the era of independence. They continued to remain alienated from the masses. This orientation and attitude invariably persisted and permeated the ranks of the newer law-enforcement agencies created within the independence era.

Judging from the manner they operate, it appears that the law-enforcement agents in Nigeria have the general belief that they are not meant to serve the common man; not meant to serve the weak and defenceless citizens. Hence, it is not uncommon to see law-enforcement agents intimidating, harassing, oppressing, terrorizing, brutalising, and trampling upon the rights of defenceless individuals. They appear to enforce the law in a manner that is skewed against the ordinary citizens. For instance, it is a common occurrence for police officers to capitalise on the ignorance, state of illiteracy, or defencelessness of some citizens to arrest, detain, and extort money from them.

As observed by Odumosu (2017, p. 115), "many Nigerians feel they are above the law, and so break laws routinely with impunity". Indeed, the class of individuals that break laws routinely with impunity are top government functionaries and highly placed individuals within the society. These are the class of people the law-enforcement agents appear committed to protect. Such individuals move around with police or even military escorts and bodyguards. In discussing the Nigerian police, for instance, Kasali (2012) observes that the basic preoccupation of the force is to serve the interest and ensure security of the elite and a few wealthy individuals and organizations. He buttressed this position by highlighting the popular belief and allegations bordering on the misuse of law enforcement agents by the Federal Government for the purpose of serving the selfish interests of top government officials.

Law enforcement agents in Nigeria conduct themselves in a manner that makes it seem as if they desire to be feared and remain friendly with the ordinary citizens. For instance, despite the fact that the police keep maintaining that they are friends to the masses, the latter never takes this seriously because the conduct of the officials cannot be reconciled with such claims. Again, the law enforcement agents appear to live with the belief that belonging to law-enforcement organizations gives one the leverage to live above the law. In the light of this, they tend to exploit their positions. For instance, the sticker of the Nigerian police, emblem of the military, or insignia of any of the law enforcement agencies pasted affixed to vehicles tend to confer the right of passage at check points.

In sum, the Nigerian law enforcement agents do not see the ordinary citizens as the primary beneficiaries of the law enforcement services. They operate as mere tools in the hands of the powerful for the oppression of the defenceless citizens. Given this outlook, the feelings, choices and preferences of the masses find little or no space within the hearts of the agencies. As such, they view the ordinary

citizens generally as victims rather than beneficiaries of law enforcement.

## 5. STATE OF LAW AND ORDER IN NIGERIA AND THE MULTIPLICITY OF LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

It goes without saying that efficient law enforcement enthrones peace, security, and orderliness in the society. As such, the state of security, peace, and orderliness in a particular environment can serve as a good yardstick for measuring the level of efficiency of law enforcement within the society. Being the first law-enforcement institution established by the British colonialists, we can understand the sense in which Adoyin and Agwanwo (2015) posited that the police once performed the roles of the other agencies that later came on board. These include the roles of Customs, Immigration, the Department of State Services, the National Intelligence Agency, the Civil Defence Corps, Road Safety Corps, Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, etc. It is not out of place, therefore, to expect that the creation of more agencies would make the tasks easier and enthrone higher level of organizational efficiency, security, and orderliness within the society.

Though the structure and orientation of this colonial establishment has been variously described as being repressive, "worse than inefficient", and against the interests of the local people (Don, 2014, p. 107), it has to be conceded that it truly succeeded in achieving the basic objective for which it was created. It cowed the local people and helped in keeping order and maintaining law as desired by the colonial masters. To that extent, one can say that it justified the original reason for its creation, which includes suppressing, repressing, intimidating, and whipping the people in line with the foreign-imposed rules. Notwithstanding the fact that the establishment was against the indigenous people, law enforcement and compliance within that period can still be rated high.

As at 1960 when Nigeria gained her independence, the police force was the primary law enforcement agency saddled with the responsibility of dealing with the civil populace in terms of keeping order and maintaining law. The implication is that they still performed most of the roles enumerated by Adoyin and Agwanwo (2015). Comparatively speaking, the state of law and order during the early days of independence was better than what is obtained in recent times. Just as expected of every dynamic society, the country started undergoing certain national metamorphosis as she advanced in age. Among the changes witnessed in the country include what Odumegwu-Ojukwu (1989) referred to as cancer of indiscipline. The political intolerance and conflict that led to the collapse of the First Republic prepared the grounds for the incursion of the military into politics. Subsequent activities of the military gave rise to a situation where the country lost control of her armed forces. Coup d'état crept into the country's lexicon and eventually became a dominant feature within the

country's political scene. The civil war that ensued six years after independence ruffled the social fabrics of the country in so many ways. For instance, violent crimes such as armed robbery and inter ethnic armed conflict began to escalate with the passage of time. Corruption began to grow by leaps and bounds and got to the extent that one can mistake it as being part of the national symbols. Indeed, the rising cases of insecurity, indiscipline, corruption, disorderliness and other negative traits within the country were signs that the existing institutions saddled with the responsibility of law enforcement have failed to deliver the goods. Faced with the situation, the government chose to create new institutions instead of strengthening the existing ones. Hence, the government created the National Security Organisation after the Head of State was assassinated in 1976. In the same vein, the Federal Road Safety Commission and other law enforcement agencies were created at a point the government felt that the Police Force was overwhelmed by some specific responsibilities it had been saddled with. But to what extent has these numerous agencies helped in enthronement of law and order?

The state of security, peace, and orderliness in Nigeria has continued to degenerate as the country advanced with age. Okechukwu (2015, p. 48) observes that "there has been an unprecedented upsurge in criminality and violence of multifarious dimensions on alarming scale with the return to civil rule in 1999". Odumosu (2017, p. 115) minced no words in stating that there is pervasive lawlessness in Nigeria and that most law enforcement officers in the country are routine law-breakers. This state of affairs can tell a lot about the state of law and order in a country. Indeed, the multiplicity of law enforcement institutions in Nigeria has not led to efficient law enforcement in the country. Things appear to be getting worse in this direction as more agencies are being created.

On a closer analysis, one can see certain elements of duplication of functions in some of the agencies, which tends to create confusion rather than promote orderliness. For instance, there was a point the tension between the EFCC and the ICPC was palpable. The then ICPC chairman, Justice Emmanuel Ayoola, had to complain about duplication of the functions of both Commissions, particularly with regard to the overlap between the ICPC Anti-Corruption and Transparency Monitoring Units and the EFCC Anti-Corruption and Transparency Committees ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economic\\_and\\_Financial\\_Crimes\\_Commission](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economic_and_Financial_Crimes_Commission)). It is equally instructive that Oronsaye's Presidential Committee on the Rationalisation and Restructuring of Federal Government Parastatals, Commissions and Agencies, in its report, recommended the reduction of the existing 263 statutory agencies of the Federal Government to 161. With regard to the law enforcement agencies, the report indicates that there is duplication of functions involving the Nigeria Police Force, FRSC, EFCC, ICPC, and the NSCDC. Part of their recommendations was that EFCC, ICPC, and the Code of

Conduct Bureau should be consolidated into one anti corruption agency; the FRSC should be abolished with their respective functions reverting to the police and other relevant agencies; the government should consider fusing the NSCDC with the Police Force; etc (FGN, 2014).

The multiplicity of law enforcement agencies in the country has, on several occasions, given rise to incidents of lawlessness, tension, violence, and insecurity. Irekia (2017) highlighted some of the several incidents of clashes between the security agents such as, the police and soldiers, naval officers and policemen, NDLEA and Air force personnel, officers of the Nigerian Navy and operatives of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), police and Air force men, etc. Just as Mutum and Odeyemi (2014) gave account of how the police and the civil defence officials clashed in Abuja, *The Nation* (2016) reported how two officers of NSCDC were shot and killed in a clash between officers of the NSCDC and the police in Calabar. These clashes involving security agents who are supposed to be enforcing the law have become a common occurrence across the country.

In a sense, it can be said that the law enforcement agencies constitute stumbling block to law enforcement. On 14<sup>th</sup> March, 2018, for instance, the newsstand was hit with the story of a clash that occurred between the officials of the FRSC on one hand, and soldiers and policemen attached to the Abuja Environmental Protection Board (AEPB) on the other. As reported by Ogundipe (2018), fracas broke out when the latter attempted to serve a violation notice at the Road Safety office in Wuse Zone 7. While the AEPB task force members claimed that the Road Safety personnel resisted the attempt to seal off the Road Safety office as ordered by a court, the former claimed that the confrontation started because the police officers and soldiers assaulted a female Road Safety marshal. Akinkuotu (2017) also reported how officials of the DSS and the EFCC were involved in a showdown for over thirteen hours on Tuesday, 21<sup>st</sup> November, 2017 when some DSS operatives resisted the EFCC officials in their attempt to arrest the former Director General of the DSS, Ekpenyong Ita, who was being investigated for offences bordering on alleged theft and diversion of public funds. Similar incident equally occurred when the EFCC operatives went to arrest the former Director General of the NIA but were resisted by men of the DSS. Hence, the Senate was prompted to wade in and institute a probe (Umoru, 2017). Such occurrences indicate that each agency is using its position to live above the law.

It is already a known fact that, in Nigeria, law enforcement operatives assist influential individuals in breaking the law with impunity. It is a common thing to come across cars bearing law enforcement officials (as escorts or orderlies) driving against the traffic or disobeying other traffic rules. The escorts/orderlies usually go out of their way to enforce the lawlessness – even if it means clashing with the officials of sister law enforcement agencies on duty. The clash between the security men attached to the Governor of Rivers State, Nyesom Wike, and those attached

to the Minister of Transport, Mr. Rotimi Amaechi, speaks volume in this regard (see Akasike, 2017).

Based on the foregoing, one can say that the multiplicity of law enforcement has not helped, and may not likely help, in improving the poor state of law and order in the country. Perhaps, the major factor driving the multiplicity of law enforcement agencies is rooted in the consideration of creating employment opportunities. *Thisday Live* (2016) hinted that despite the stiff opposition mounted by the police and the NSCDC on the grounds of duplication of functions, the House of Representatives still went ahead to pass the Bill for the establishment of the Peace Corps. From what it appeared, the major argument advanced by the House of Reps was that establishing the outfit would enhance youth empowerment. Again, many people expressed worry and apprehension when Oronsaye's Presidential Committee Report recommended the scrapping of some of the law enforcement agencies. The main cause of worry for these set of individuals was not the impact of scrapping of the agencies on law enforcement but its implication on the jobs of the affected individuals. Across the country, there were no serious arguments indicating that the situation of law enforcement would worsen should the agencies be scrapped.

As pointed out by Adayin and Agwanwo (2015), the different law enforcement agencies lack inter-agency cooperation and collaboration. The image they throw up to the members of the public is that of unnecessary rivalry and competition for relevance. An example can be drawn from what transpired when the aide of former Governor of Edo state, Adams Oshiomhole, was killed. While the police paraded some individuals whom they (policemen) claimed had 'confessed' to the crime, the DSS paraded a different set of individuals that were actually in possession of the phones stolen from the deceased. Despite the fact that the version of the DSS operatives sounded more credible, the police maintained their stand. Thus, both agencies never worked together to resolve the matter on a common ground. Again, lack of inter-agency collaboration among the agencies manifests in the manner each agency sets to generate her data. When the FRSC proposed for a change and fresh registration of number plates and new unified drivers licensing scheme, the agency hinged her reason on the need to generate biometric data of vehicle owners and drivers. Within the same period, the police equally began clamouring for the initiation of the BCMR (Biometric Central Motor Registration) in order to generate the biometric data of drivers and vehicle owners. In an environment where there is inter agency collaboration, the biometric data generated by one agency is supposed to serve another agency that requires similar data.

## 6. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Nigeria has several law enforcement agencies created over time through a gradual process. But the question remains whether the creation of more and more agencies has helped in enthroning a better society with regard to

maintenance of law and order. Judging from the state of peace, security, and orderliness, the country cannot account for the existence of numerous law enforcement agencies. In fact, the country appears to be getting worse as additional agencies are being created. The evil of corruption keeps expanding in size and dimension while security challenges keep mounting higher. From what it seems, each additional agency created for the purpose of law enforcement end up being trapped in the same web that had jeopardised the efficient performance of the older ones.

Corruption has permeated the fabrics of Nigeria. This social cankerworm, which began on a small scale, suddenly grew by leaps and bounds through a gradual process and has continued to affect the efficiency of government institutions. Thus, as new government agencies are being created within the Nigerian environment, they are exposed to the evil currents of corruption. If an existing agency failed due to the influence of corruption, it stands to reason that newer ones would fail once exposed to corrupt environment. The implication of this is that creating a new agency simply because an older one is corrupt and therefore inefficient cannot be a solution to solving the problem of inefficiency in the system. For instance, many people shared the impression that the FRSC officials were not corrupt as at the time they newly started their operations. However, the same cannot be said about the agency presently. In like manner, other newer law enforcement agencies cannot be exonerated from corrupt practices.

The Nigerian environment is one that encourages the thriving of strong personalities rather than strong institutions. This manifests in different ways. For instance, the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) is a government agency that was formed in 1993. However, Nigerians never felt the influence of the agency until Dora Akunyili became the Director General. The general opinion is that the performance of the agency has plummeted ever since she left the organization. Same goes with the EFCC, which many people believed was bolder under the incumbency of Nuhu Ribadu as the Chairman. Whether true or false, the impression being created is that the efficiency of an organization largely depends on a single individual that is heading it. Thus, an organization only performs well when it is 'lucky' to have the right person in place. This has been the fate of government agencies in Nigeria where the performance of agencies are determined by the 'body language' of the Chief executive. Again, it is a common thing for Nigerian presidents to abuse their power by personalising government agencies. It is in this regard that one hears of a president using the law enforcement operatives to fight his perceived enemies or that the federal government is misusing the law enforcement operatives and this in itself destroys the spirit of law enforcement. Given this circumstance, creating more agencies will translate into expanding the 'war chest' of the president and as such cannot promote efficient maintenance of law and order.

There are strong indications that existing law enforcement agencies suffer from poor funding, which affects their operations generally. For instance, it is no longer a secret that one of the reasons Boko Haram, armed robbers, and other armed criminals usually overpower the police is because the latter operates with inferior weapons. It is common to hear that the police could not get to the scene of crime promptly because they lack operational facilities. Like the officials in most government institutions within the country, law enforcement operatives are living under the throes of poor/delayed salaries and uninspiring welfare package, which grossly affects motivation. In an environment where the government has the penchant for funding her agencies poorly and neglecting the welfare of workers, creating more agencies will even compound the problem of funding and militate against their performance generally.

Nigeria is divided along ethnic lines and this has affected the pattern of social relations among the different peoples from the various ethnicities in the country. Nepotism and favouritism are part of the problems facing Nigeria and this equally affects the law enforcement agents in the performance of their duties. The comment reported to have been made by Governor Kashim Shettima to the effect that Generals from southern Nigeria had recorded more progress than their northern counterparts in fighting Boko Haram (Emewu, 2018) speaks volume in this regard. The implication of this is that law enforcement agents of the northern extraction may relax the rules while dealing with the northern citizens and would be harsher while dealing with those from other parts of the country. On the other hand, the issue of federal character and making of appointments based on considerations of favouritism creates opportunity for the wrong persons to be employed or placed in a sensitive position within a law enforcement agency. By and large, this will affect the efficiency of the organisation.

Given the Nigerian environment, there is no doubt that creating more agencies cannot help in enhancing law enforcement. The best option therefore is to strengthen the existing organization towards performing better. One such was to achieve this goal is to rid the organizations of the fundamental problems within the country, as enumerated above.

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