Reassessing Post Conflict Security in Jos-Pateau:
The Option of **Citizens' Watch**

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ABSTRACT

The issue of conflict security has not been addressed by intellectuals and policy makers in the attempts to proffer solution. Post cold war conflicts reflected structural changes and the declining capacity of the state. While conflict is part of coexistence, persistent state inability to contain it is indicative of failure of existing strategies. The provision of conflict security in Jos demonstrates inability to preempt, contain and manage conflict. The use of soldiers epitomise the lack of confidence in the police by the state. The destruction caused by soldiers exacerbates post conflict settlement conditions. Governance and regime type negated the role of police. This paper argues for the creation of community security watch (CSW) to act as surveillance in the communities with the potential of serving as early warning system through intelligence gathering in order to assist the police in maintaining law and order.

INTRODUCTION

The persistence (NAK Josprof 3025, 1939-1946: 1, 2, 31, 41; Otite and Albert 2001; Gyuse and Ajene 2006; Akinwumi et al 2007) of conflicts in Jos and the central Nigerian area is symptomatic of the structure of relations between the groups that constituted the polity called Nigeria. Often the notion of majority and minority is used to described the relations and nowhere is this manifested than in the central Nigerian area where there has been the attempt to undermine the character of the nationalities abound in the area. Until the mass movement of population in the area following colonization in the last century and specifically the policies promoted first by the colonial government and later by the regional government, the nature of conflict in the pre colonial period area was different. Resources have been plundered in the course of inter group relations but the pattern where land and indigeneship have been contested

as is the case today did not feature then. Indeed while in the previous exchange attempts have been made by the communities to resist religious proselytization, what is evident in religion been one of the platform of conflict in the area was also absent. The growth of population but above all the awareness that followed the lessening of restraint internationally and the recognition of minority rights have served as impetus on the part of the much maligned and dominated communities to begin to reassess their existence and to reassert their preeminence in the scheme of things. The wave of democratization itself induced conflict in the polity as the democracy dividend became hinged on the delivery of votes. Indeed the virulence of conflict is related to the return of democracy.

In all these, what is evident is the failure of the state to adequately ensure the safety of lives and properties and above all to provide for a mechanism that would address the persistence of conflict. The situation on the ground pointed to the fact that the political elite have learnt no lesson from managing conflict and conflict security as the next conflict and conflict security turns out worse than the previous one. The state's failure can be located in two areas. First is in addressing the underlying economic factors behind the conflicts and secondly in engaging the seeming novel area of conflict security (Apter 2009; Baxter et al 2009; HSN 2008). This is nowhere evident than in Jos since the 1990. Conflict security should be separated from the conventional understanding of security which has informed the undertaking of the state in handling conflicts. In the scheme of conventional security provision, the police have been marginalized and confined to providing the early evidence of incompetence in managing crisis by the state. Thus in the government and citizen psychology, the police cannot be trusted in managing conflict. Indeed there is a consensus among citizens rating the different security forces based on their ability to restore order. Thus the police come last on the scale of citizen's preference for the most effective agency to provide security in conflict. While the soldiers have emerged as the sought-after outfit in restoring order in conflict situation, the respect the citizens have for them is in their ability to shoot to kill only. Citizens' preference for them reflects their socialization process and the poverty of understanding the roles of the different security forces. Operationally, there is wide gulf separating soldiers and police in the provision of security and in the restoration of order in the event of the outbreak of conflict. It would appear that the dominance of soldiers in governance elevated their use in conflict security.

However, while they may have been successful in restoring order, they have been unable to provide long term security that would minimize the consistent outbreak of conflict. This is indicative of the fact that conflict security has not been successful beyond preventing the belligerent from fighting each other. In most cases the warring communities have been excluded from the process of providing security for their communities. The incorporation of citizen in the security of the communities in a form of community policing through surveillance and intelligence gathering could assist in reducing the prospect of the use of soldiers in conflict resolution. This will enhance the role of the police in the coordination of the process thus increasing the confidence of the people on its ability.

Conflicts in Jos: a synopsis

Two types of conflict profiles can be discerned in the Jos area. The first conflict and perhaps the earliest in recorded history is the one involving settlers from other parts of Nigeria (NAK Josprof 3025, 1939-1946). They include primarily but are not restricted to the Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba. The first two have had a history of engaging each other over control of economic resources. These groups were attracted into the Jos-Plateau area because of the availability of mineral resources such as tin and columbite and the economy that grew as a result of mining activities. In the colonial economic hierarchy, the troikas came third after the colonial mining companies, the Lebanese and Syrian concerns. They filled the areas where the two other groups left while the autochthonous groups were at the bottom of the economic ladder. The development subsequently fuelled resentment especially with the regionalization (Onoja 1999) of politics first among the Hausa who complained about the dominance of the other groups and subsequently in a rare cooperation between the Hausa and autochthonous mining elements against the Igbo and Yoruba.

The second type of conflict is that between the autochthonous communities and the settlers especially the Hausa. The claim of the Hausa derived from proximity, pre colonial and colonial legacies and the ambiguous nature of the constitution (Ayua 2005: 61-80). Of the three dominant settlers' communities, the Hausa are close to the Jos area and in that instance have had a history of sustained engagement in the area in the pre colonial period thus emerging as the dominant group within the settler communities. The arbitrariness of colonial policies had also

left its mark on the nature of relation between the Hausa and the Jos autochthonous communities. The inclusion of the area into the fold of the north like the rest of the middle belt communities, the appointment of Hausa administrators into the colonial service and economy and the continuation of the trend in the late colonial period into early independence all constituted sources of bitterness in the area. The source of conflict is land and lately political office. By virtue of the fact that the Jos area was part of the northern region and the Hausa controlled the levers of power in the course of the colonial period until the late 1970s when indigenous groups began to assert themselves in the wider rebirth of middle belt politics, the Hausa have constantly asserted their claim over land and political office especially in Jos. Of all the areas in the Middle belt, the Jos-Plateau axis has served as a pawn in the wider contest between the far north and the middle belt since colonial rule. The contemporary character of conflict has often times dovetailed into religion pitching the Hausa who are Muslims on the one hand and the autochthonous groups who are mostly Christians and traditional worshippers and Christians from the south, on the other. This is because the character of the contest in the late colonial period had included the persistent attempt to Islamize the area. Of the two conflict types in the area, the latter one has since subsumed all other conflict types and the city is now effectively divided along religious and political line. In the ensuing confrontation between the divides, distinctions are no longer observed as the frontline is clear.

Inter-communal conflicts are not a new phenomenon in Nigeria (HRW 2001:4). For decades, communities in various parts of the country have fought, often violently, for political and economic control. Thousands have died in these conflicts and successive governments have failed to take effective action to bring those responsible to justice or to prevent these clashes from recurring. The occurrence of September 2001 was a defining moment in the conflicts in Jos. Prior to the event there were many minor conflicts between the indigenes and settlers (Fwatshak 2007:58-68; Akinwumi et al 2007) whose cost to the community, the 2001 event superseded in all ways. Retaining essentially an economic undertone, the resort to religion and the residual of unsettled past grievances gave the 2001 episode a footnote in annals of violence perpetrated in conflicts in the area (HRW 2001:7). The relatively peaceful disposition of Jos when compared to other parts of Nigeria made the city a magnet for population from other parts especially following government policies that increased the level of intolerance among the competing groups in

the country. Accordingly, many people fleeing conflicts in their own areas had sought protection and safety in Jos and some had even settled there. Some observers believe that this regular influx of populations from neighboring states may have ended up destabilizing the tranquility of Jos (PLSG 2004:92). Until September 2001, Jos had always been viewed as a peaceful city. To many Nigerians, the Plateau State motto of "Home of Peace and Tourism" was more than an empty slogan. Indeed, people fleeing in 2000 and 2001 from clashes in Kaduna, Bauchi, Taraba, and Nasarawa states may have inadvertently contributed to creating an atmosphere of fear among inhabitants of Plateau State by testifying to the atrocities they had left behind, some of which were still continuing. The increase in the population in Jos, in particular, also created an increase in economic pressures, leading in turn to the scarcity of some goods and increase in prices. Resources became stretched, and tensions began to rise (HRW 2001:5). It exacerbated the strains between indigenes and settlers and this manifested in the competition in Jos over political posts.

In 1994, there were the first signs of violence and attacks on religious institutions following the appointment of a Muslim as sole administrator of Jos North local government area. There were tensions over other public appointments in 1996 and again in 1998. The case, which contributed most directly to the outbreak of hostilities in September 2001, was the appointment of the poverty eradication coordinator in Jos North in August, a few weeks before the crisis. The appointment of a Hausa Muslim into an agency meant to alleviate the economic crisis unleashed by the SAP underscored, in no uncertain term, the economic motivation of the conflict. Religion became a tool of mobilization among the belligerents (Fwatshak 2007). Indeed the interpretation of developments from this prism heightened following previous experiences, the adoption of sharia and the 9-11 attacks. It was this that explained the rationalization of all subsequent conflict on religious term including the conduct of the 2008 local government election in Jos North.

Insecurity in Security in Jos: Towards a Conflict Security

The provision of security over the years but in particular since the 1990s has demonstrated litanies of avoidable failures on the part of the political elite and the security services (PLSG 2004:89-108). Of these there are three or four layers of failed security hierarchies. The first is the lack of response and initiative on the part of the political leadership of the state to respond to intelligence and security reports to act to preempt the crisis. This has been

substantiated by research and anecdotes from security officials and others especially in the 2001(HRW 2001:16-17) and 2008(Hallah, Agbese and Lalo 2009:1, 5, 6) conflicts. Secondly, the police as the prime agency saddled with managing law and order have, over the years, succumbed to their share of the crisis of governance resulting in their inability to utilize the diverse security infrastructure to maintain order. The lack of leadership from the state command of the force especially in the 2001 conflict translated into non deployment, deliberate delay and false sense of response which exacerbated the intensity of the carnage and further plummeted peoples' confidence in the force (HRW 2001:17). It also reawakened the demand for a security apparatus control by the state in order to circumvent the need to rely on a force whose operational directive must first clear from the bureaucratic maze in the national capital. Thirdly, police incompetence was assuaged by the deployment of the military which when it overcame its hurdle in the hierarchies of command, lacked the expertise and competence to manage civil disorder with its use of overwhelming force in restraining the belligerents. The repeated deployment of the military in civil conflict defined the face of conflict security- itself an adaptation from the colonial conflict control manual and its utilization without modification by the post colonial elite since it was first deployed in 1964 in spite of the presence of the police mobile unit. This enhanced the reputation of soldiers among the civil populace and the political leadership as the most effective conflict resolution outfit. With each 'success', the prospect of ever regenerating the police in the scheme of things suffer in spite of the numerous reforms (Bendix and Stanley 2008; Police News 2007:16-20; allafrica.com 2009).

The face of security since 1999 when civil rule returned reflects the fact that the police cannot be trusted by the deploying authority and the public as joint patrol is the vogue. In all of these the subservience of the force is evident in their daily operation. Fourthly and more importantly is the repeated refusal of the state to learn anything from its encounter with civil conflicts which would have shaped its approach to instituting a conflict security manual of its own. As far as the provision of security in conflict area of Jos is concerned, nothing has been learnt by the authority and the security services. The failure of conflict security spanned the absence of political will, the failure of intelligence or more appropriately the criminal unwillingness to act on available intelligence to police/soldiers incompetence and complicity with different sides and, the overzealous recklessness of soldiers (PLSG 2004:89-108).

The inability of the authority to provide security for the people has witnessed the attempt to reorder settlement pattern resulting in the polarization of the city. What is evident is the recreation of the colonial divide and rule tactics of settling indigenous population separately from each other. While it is the case in most northern cities where Sabon garis or new settlement are created to house immigrants using religion and cultural attributes as important criteria, the one in Jos rearranged the cosmopolitan character of the place using religion primarily. There are distinct areas where the different religious groups feel secure and this development came in the wake of the intrusion of religion as a weapon of mobilization in the phase of the conflict beginning in the 1990s.

Conflict security should target two related areas. The first is the economic causes of the conflict which affect the social, political, cultural, psychological and environmental spaces available to the people. The second is the security superstructure and infrastructure. It is only in adopting this holistic approach would we begin to see a turnaround in the solution to the perennial crisis in Jos whose effects reverberate on the Plateau. Conflict security differs from conventional security as it seeks to tailor its methods to the conflict situation. It is all encompassing as it includes not just security infrastructures, community participation but especially addressing the underlying causes of the conflict. In the Jos case, the major cause of the conflict is the dwindling economic opportunities. The resort to religion exploits its emotive potential in an atmosphere heavily laced by similar antecedence and the prevailing religious inclined conflicts worldwide.

The effort of the state has not tackled this and neither has it reckoned with the implications- economic, political, social, security- of the relocation of people from different parts of Nigeria following the explosion of intolerance in the wake of the different phases of the crisis of post colonial state. The first of this was the annulment of the election of June 12, 1994 and its many types of fallout including population displacement and relocation as a result of insecurity. The second was the demand for sharia with the dawn of democracy in 1999 in some northern states and its consequences. Jos, supposedly the home of peace and tourism and a middle ground in the manifestation of extremism in other parts of Nigeria, took in the displaced persons. All these heightened the already stretched infrastructures and inter group relations. In the midst of

these, the political elite of the state watched oblivious of the potentially positive and negative consequences of the developments.

Community Security Watch (CSW)

The conflict security situation of the city contained anecdotes (Interview 2009) and revelations about the slow response of security agencies, inability and/or unwillingness of the state apparatuses to act on intelligence reports and the systematic failure to contain the perennial conflict in Jos. It is important that the citizens of the state who suffer in the event of any outbreak begin to organize their own security.

The term community security watch derives from the current division of the city's residents. The population rearrangement that became evident in the city was a gradual process as the crisis took a religious undertone. This has given rise to two distinct communities along the two contesting religions- Christianity and Islam. While the long term objective of the community security watch is to bridge the division through joint action, the immediate plan is to create the structures and evolve the methods of nipping potential crisis points in the bud. The organizational pattern of the community security watch should include all residents who would serve as listening post, collecting and passing information to the leadership of the CSW. The different CSW could meet once in a month and exchange information with the police through the police-CSW forum. The forum should include conflict and peace inclined nongovernmental organizations and the independent media houses. The need to include the latter is because of the distrust for government security agencies and media houses following years of encounter with them. The terms of reference of the CSW should be information gathering, watching suspicious activities, inciting sermons in religious houses and other signs of building tensions, all of which constitute early warning signs.

The importance of citizen involvement in conflict prevention should be stressed and in the light of perennial service inefficiency, community security watch members should be taught to be security conscious. The establishment of community security surveillance in the different

neighbourhood of the city can result in the restoration of law and order. The most frequent recorded mechanisms by which citizens' surveillance is supposed to reduce conflict is as a result of residents looking out for suspicious activities and reporting this to the local community security watch. There are at least three ways in which surveillance and reporting might reduce conflicts. One, visible surveillance might reduce potential for conflict as a result of its effect on perception and decision of potential trouble makers. Watching and reporting has deterrent effect since it is not evident who is doing the watching. The realization only comes when they are stopped in their track. Secondly, it might reduce the outbreak of conflict as a result of an increase flow of useful information from the public to the community security watch for onward transmission to the police. This should be done with the knowledge of the nongovernmental organizations and the media. This includes reporting early warning (Nhara 1996; Cilliers 2005) of suspicious movement of persons and meetings especially at odd hours. Thirdly, activity such as this will elevate social control mechanisms. Community watch might enhance cohesion, activism and efficacy of community which will enhance their ability to check crisis.

The idea of community security watch is a variant of community policing which was part of the pre colonial political structure of the polities of central Nigeria where Jos-Plateau belong and whose reconceptualisation in modern policing is subject of the perennial corruption endemic in the police force and the Nigerian state. The CSW should have complimented community policing if it was working in Nigeria. While societies that have tried community policing are moving into partnership policing, the Nigeria situation persistently underscores systemic failure. As an idea, partnership policing developed during the 1980s when the model of police paternalism that was embedded in community policing, evolved into a new concept of independent agents working together in partnership with formal structures. This form of policing conforms to the ideal of a 'multi-agency approach' whereby the police, the public, elected officials, government and other agencies work in partnership to address crime and community safety (Oppler 1997). In Jos, what has seemed evident is the repeated failure of whatever model is used to guarantee community security especially where it involved the so called multi agency approach especially the police, elected officials or public servants and government. The involvement of the public in managing conflict has not been tried in the manner recommended in community security watch. The basis of community security watch must be the recognition of

the role of community in keeping order and those of the participating groups-the police, NGOS and media-that they have something to gain by working together.

Jakkie Colliers's conception of early warning systems as using open source material and generally aim to serve human security, not national or state interests (Cilliers 2005), capture its relevance to the idea of community security watch. This distinction between early warning and intelligence is necessary because of the suspicion and intrusion inherent in the latter. Intelligence systems rely primarily on secrecy, situation rooms and the encrypted communication of classified information. Early warning, on the other hand, depends principally upon transparent methods and the sharing of information, even though these exchanges and the communication of results may be classified and restricted to different levels of users. It follows that early warning systems tend to be decentralized and dependent upon the involvement of sections of civil society for information input and analysis. Early warning can therefore be described as a 'disinterested intelligence system' within which collaboration and information sharing is cardinal. It requires a cooperative effort at international, regional, national and local levels; no single state or organization can do it alone or retain a monopoly over it (Cilliers 2005).

The deployment of early warning which we defined as including information gathering, watching suspicious activities, inciting sermons in religious houses and other signs of building tensions should be the central platform of the work of community security watch. Accordingly, in order to fully comprehend and develop a practical system of early warning in Jos, the causative aspects of the conflict need to be understood. One useful set of causal approaches includes the basically general theories about the nature of society and social change. The changing nature of relationships between production and distribution in many African States imply that individuals and groups may be forced into conflict. Other related causes of conflict focus on visible political, ethnic or religious persecution. A broader causal scheme, however, would point to human rights violations by governments or social forces as the fundamental factor in African conflicts. Such rights cover and go beyond political, racial, ethnic or religious persecution to include the notion that people who do not enjoy a basic minimum of material and social rights, might be forced into conflict. Their marginalisation may result either from deliberate government decisions, explicit social practices, or from their own failure to act in such a way that will produce a reasonable level of personal welfare (Nhara 1996).

Much of the preceding conflict causation abounds in the crisis in Jos. It is about the nature of society and social change. The city is a cosmopolitan one having, in the course of its evolution, attracted numerous ethnic nationalities coming to take advantage of the natural resources and accommodating weather conditions. The incident of changing relationship in the course of the production of goods and services in the different historical epochs had a lasting impact on the character of the town. Manifestations of these changes include violations of rights by government or social forces in all facets and the incidence of deprivations. All these are evident in the town's crisis profile.

Conclusion

The time has come for the government at all levels, citizens, security agencies, civic organizations, media and religious bodies to reexamine conflict security in Jos following the consistent and avoidable failure of the past. The provision of security has been the responsibility of constituted authority alone. The results are obvious to everyone. The inauguration of CSW will complement statutory bodies and even supplement them in view of their limited number. Using early warning devices developed to suit each local condition and working in alliance with conflict oriented nongovernmental organizations and the media; they can control the outbreak of conflict. CSW when properly constituted and the communities sensitize to the merits of dialogue and peaceful coexistence may regenerate trust and condition for security and development.

The need for a community security watch stems from the fact that nothing statutory works in Nigeria. The police are not just inadequate but that whatever innovations introduced into the system such as the community policing scheme end up on paper. Nigeria has never had adequate police personnel since independence. Indeed it is a condition that predated the attainment of independence. Nigeria has never met the UN ratio of police per population and has continued to suffer the consequences of under-policing. Jos is no exception hence the need for community security watch. The police are not only insufficient and handicapped in terms of logistic; they have demonstrated partisanship in any attempt to resolve the conflict.

The centrality of the police in any attempt to contain and manage conflict security in Nigeria cannot be overemphasized. The persistent deployment of soldiers has affected the national conflict resolution psychology as well as hastily restored 'order' without getting at the root of the conflict. The former Inspector General of police Sunday Ehindero had a 10 point

programme of action whose motto was "to serve and protect with integrity". Three areas of the 10 point plan of action contained panacea for resolving conflict security and persistent police incompetence given the right economic and political framework if properly pursued. This did not materialize. They include plans number one, three and four respectively (Police News 2007:105). The non implementation of the 10 point and the removal of the Inspector General as well as the inauguration of a new helmsman, mission statement and reform reflected the crisis of continuity in policies that confronts government in Nigeria.

In the former Inspector General's plan of action, plan one envisaged effective crime prevention and control through intelligence-led policing. We have noted that the problem bedeviling policing in Nigeria and specifically in the conflict prone Jos area is the absence of effective intelligence gathering methods. Since the buildup to outbreak of conflict takes time, intelligence gathering and above all its utilization has the potential to check violent outbreak of conflict. Anecdotes from residents and serving and retired police personnel not only pointed to the absence of this but also to the failure on the part of the authorities to utilize this. Plan number three is on conflict prevention and resolution and the method of attaining this includes monitoring potential areas of conflicts and alert appropriate authority, training in interventions in situations of violent conflicts to ensure that they do not escalate, linger or cause serious harm or damage and maintaining relationships with groups and organizations to develop trust and partnership in conflict resolution. The methodologies are good but its implementation remained the biggest obstacle in the police. The police do not have the training, manpower and techniques to monitor potential areas of conflict and they lack the ability to maintain relationships with groups considering their notoriety (Onoja 2005-2006) in all facets let alone developing trust and partnership in conflict resolution. Finally plan number four envisages community policing and police-public partnership. With the legendary distrust of Nigerians for the police, plan number four would remain an ideal with little potential for realization. While other societies are moving from community policing to partnership policing as an improvement, community policing in Nigeria is a statement of intent embossed in rhetoric, flashy four wheel drive vehicles and glossy billboard advertisement. Many Nigerians will admit that their communities did not benefit from community policing or police-public partnership. Police-public partnership is relative to big

cities and personalities. If it exist in Jos it did not made its presence felt in the conflict security of the place.

Indeed plan numbers one, three and four are all tied down to personnel availability, training and logistics. The Nigeria police are legendary in its under-policing profile and this is testified by the absence of statistics and knowledge of the number of personnel in its employment. The lack of personnel can also be regarded as part of the legacies of the British which was compounded by the intrusion of the Nigerian character. The British had kept the personnel relatively small and tied this down to ability to pay especially for the Native Authority police and their dual utilization as police and troops especially for the Government police (NAK Makprof 1946-47:32; NAK Makprof 1950-51:54; NAK Makprof 1934-38; NAK Makprof 1944-47). The police authority still does not know their number as indicated in their report. For instance it was estimated that the Port Security Police was "reported by different sources to have strength in 1990 of between 1,500 and 12,000". It was also reported that by 1983, according to the federal budget, "the strength of the NPF was almost 152,000, but other sources estimated it to be between 20,000 and 80,000" (NPPR undated: 20-21). With such fluctuating strength of the force even the traditional requirement of having more men to police areas had not been met let alone making the force a technology driven one. Thus the imperative of community security watch in the provision of security for Jos.

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