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The United States-Nigerian Military Co-operation and Adherence to Rules of Engagement by the Nigerian Military during Internal Security Operations, 1999-2020

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Abstract

Despite United States-Nigeria military cooperation which has provided an opportunity for professional training of the Nigerian military, particularly in the area of 'rules of engagement', there has been series of reported human rights violations in Nigeria. This usually takes place during internal conflicts that necessitate the intervention of the military. There has been non-adherence to international humanitarian law as well as weak enforcement of national legal frameworks pertaining to human rights. The study examined how the U.S. professional training has reoriented the Nigerian Armed Forces regarding respect and protection of human rights in conflict situations. The study adopted 'case study' method that focuses on few cases in order to engage in an empirical analysis. There still existing lacunas in the operations of the Nigerian armed forces regarding protection and respect of the rights of civilians. Thus, there have been widespread and pervasive human rights abuses perpetrated by the Nigerian military which have resulted to arbitrary killings, tortures, rapes and so forth. Sadly, the Nigerian state provides shield to the perpetrators of unlawful acts that pervert the basic rules of engagement. Absence of effective rule of law in Nigeria emboldens the army in particular, to perpetuate colossal human rights violations. The paper argues that the behavioural patterns of the Nigerian military would remain unchanged until the character of the Nigerian state changes. There should be a strong recall of rule of law by establishing strong institutions where the justice system in Nigeria is viable enough to control the state itself.

Keywords: Nigerian military, Internal conflicts, Rules of engagement, International Humanitarian law, National legal framework, Human rights

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Introduction

There have been decades of military cooperation between the United States of America and Nigeria as two unparalleled sovereign entities. Extant literature attests to the wide difference regarding professional orientations and operations of the U.S. and Nigeria military organisations. Many years of professional disparities have profoundly manifested pertaining to the patterns of ‘rules of engagement’ by the Nigerian and U.S. military. For instance, there is an advanced argument that there exists a wide difference between the U.S. and Nigeria armed forces in terms of strategic doctrines, defence policy, pursuit of policy objectives, show of military force, and respect for human rights. As against U.S. military, there have been allegations that the Nigerian military is officially involved in human right abuses, pursuit of primordial or sectional interests, promotion of personal glory, engaging in rape, killing of civilian, destruction of properties and so forth. The Nigerian military has been involved in high profile killings of unarmed and defenceless civilians in Nigeria, as was the case in the 10th November 1995 extra-judicial execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other Ogoni environmental activists by the Nigerian military regime (Nwachukwu, Aghamelo and Nwaneri, 2014), Odi, Bayalsa massacre, Zaki Ibiam, Benue massacre, Lekki toll gate killings, Afaraukwu, Abia killings, and so on. Hence, Ahmad (2012) avers that military operations in Nigeria to suppress security challenges appear efficient but has left indelible marks in places like Maiduguri, Zaki Biam, Kano, and Odi and in many other parts of Nigeria (cited in Segun, Gberevbie & Onor, 2021). The use of the military in special occasions for maintenance of internal security takes place in both developed and developing countries. However, it is self-evident that the persistent behavioural patterns of the Nigerian military are largely in defiance of the operational ethos of the U.S. military.

The primary constitutional responsibility of the Nigerian military is to defend the territorial integrity of the country. However, due to the rise in internal security threats and policy dislocations, the military is today involved in performing police duties. In most cases, internal crises are perceived to escalate beyond the capabilities of the police and other paramilitary agencies. In some cases, duties that should ordinarily be carried out by the Nigeria police are shifted to the Nigerian military during internal crises. There is an argument the police are ill-prepared and poorly positioned to effectively curb serious internal disturbances. This, therefore, exposes the military, particularly the army, to frequent contact with the civil populace resulting to human rights violations. This scenario has continued despite years of Nigeria-U.S. military relations, particularly in the area of adherence to ‘rules of engagement’. The armed forces of Nigeria probably appear not to be guided by the Law of Armed Conflicts (LOAC), which forms part of domestic and international laws that regulate the conduct of armed hostilities. LOAC overlaps two important components; the 1949 Geneva Conventions and additional Protocols of 1977, which are concerned with protecting the rights of persons involved in conflict, and describing means and methods of warfare respectively. The International Covenants on Human Rights describes human rights generally as the rights a person has simply because he/she is a human being and that

human rights are derived from the inherent dignity of the human nature (International Covenant on Human Rights, 1977). In fact, the provisions of these instruments are claimed to have the status of *jus cogens* (a peremptory rule that by principle does not permit derogation). However, the official operations of the Nigerian military negate this description, as the military is involved in suppressing, intimidating, molesting and killing of defenceless civilians, thereby working against rule of engagement.

The level of professionalism that will allow the Nigerian armed forces to handle internal crisis without sliding into blatant human rights violations is yet to be achieved. Notwithstanding U.S. provision of technical training, funding, equipment, professional advice to Nigerian military, the latter is still confronted with enormous technical and military hardware challenges. Mustapha (2014) puts it that the serviceability of equipment in the Nigerian armed forces is very low. Poor governance and systemic corruption has caused poor performance of the Nigerian armed forces particularly in the current democratic governance. For instance, corruption has led to misuse of foreign aid in Nigeria (Alesina and Dollar, 2000), and foreign aid has increased corruption (Asongu, 2012 and Jellal, 2013). Despite series of technical training on intelligence gathering, there still remains internal contradictions sabotaging the whole system of information sharing within the military. In this regard, the U.S. security initiatives and programmes have not, in actual sense, translated into improved security system reform and stability in Nigeria.

Extant literature of have espoused U.S.-Nigeria relations in the areas of trade and investment as well as the Nigeria's military cooperation with the U.S., which include, training and re-training the Nigerian military personnel; providing patrol vessels for the Nigerian military (navy); and providing military hardware in form of assistance or business transaction. However, literature seem to overlook how U.S.-Nigeria military cooperation ensures adherence to rules of engagement by the Nigerian military. In other words, studies are yet to adequately explore how U.S. professional re-orientation on Rules of Engagement (ROE) has effectively guided operations of the Nigerian armed forces during conflicts in Nigeria. The study tends to close this gap.

United States Training of the Nigerian Armed Forces on Military Intelligence Capacity

Military assistance and capacity-building programmes have become veritable strategies for peace operations, stability operations, and development programmes (Ostensen, Brady and Schütte, 2018). These initiatives, as argued by the authors, are typically intended to enable local security forces to tackle local and regional insecurity, with the aim of strengthening fragile states and keep transnational threats at bay. It is evident that U.S. security programmes, local and international, explicitly give credence to the above strategies. For instance, the 2011 National Strategy for Counterterrorism, the 2014 Quadrennial Defence Review, and the 2018 National Defense Strategy all point to building partner capacity and delivering security assistance as important elements of U.S. national security policy.

In order to tackle security challenges such as arms and drugs smuggling, human trafficking, oil theft, militancy, piracy, and potential terrorism, the United States and European partners have provided Nigerian Navy with capacity-building training due to strategic importance of the oil-rich Gulf of Guinea (GoG). However, internal contradictions within the Nigerian Navy have more or less sabotaged U.S. efforts in this regard. For instance, the Nigerian Navy was accused of facilitating criminal activity, especially sea piracy and oil theft (Pérouse de Montclos 2012; Katsouris and Sayne 2013; Ingwe 2015). As explained by Østensen, Brady and Schütte (2018:3):

...in the case of the Nigerian maritime security forces, satellite surveillance, improved vessels, advanced communication tools, intelligence-gathering skills, tactical skills, and so on may all serve the wrong cause if they are supplied to parts of the security apparatus that are involved in corrupt or criminal activity. By providing this type of training and equipment, therefore, donors can inadvertently buttress corrupt actors and further entrench corruption within security institutions.

The U.S-Nigeria security cooperation in form of military aid has increased especially since Nigeria returned to democracy. In 2014, the U.S. Department of State Spokesperson, Jen Paski, stated that the U.S. supports the Nigerian military in the area of intelligence sharing, training of soldiers and other measures to combat Boko Haram insurgency (Ibekwe, 2014). Ploch (2012) explains that U.S. Fiscal Year focused on military professionalization, peacekeeping support and training, and land and maritime border security. In this very period, U.S. officials stressed the importance of civilian oversight of the military, and respect for human rights and the rule of law, in their engagements with Nigerian military officials (McCulley, 2013). In addition to peacekeeping support provided through the State Department's African Contingency Operations Training and Assistance (ACOTA) programme, Nigeria also benefits from security cooperation activities with the California National Guard through the National Guard State Partnership Programme. U.S. counterterrorism assistance to Nigeria includes programmes coordinated through TSCTP and other regional State Department initiatives, as well as through Department of Defense funds.

The U.S. military assistance to Nigeria has generated debates among analysts questioning the impact of U.S. military assistance to Nigeria. Nonetheless, there is a consensus that the U.S. has a well-developed strategic doctrine, defence policy, military force, and security consciousness (Dapo, 2018). The arguments regarding the impact of U.S.-Nigeria military cooperation on the Nigerian military seems to expose Nigeria as more of political institution rather a professional one.

Dapo (2018: 217) argues that:

...there is no doubt in the minds of Nigerians that Nigeria ceased to have a professional army since 1966 especially after the civil war. What Nigeria has had since 1966 is a political army with a regional political agenda. No Nigerian government, civilian, or military, since the end of the civil war has been able to resolve the ratio of the defence budget to the

national budget. Up till now, no one knows how many men and officers are in the Nigerian armed forces. No one knows the ratio of spending on personnel and on equipment. Nigeria does not know what a professional army is.

Rules of Engagement (ROE) and Human Rights Violations by the Nigerian Military

Rules of engagement means orders regulating the use of force and offensive actions by military units in the face of an adversary (Hosang, 2017). By this, they are commonly written specifically for the operation to which they are to apply rules governing the use of force and actions, which can (potentially) influence or regulate the escalation of the use of force or hostilities in the area of operations. ROE are ultimately and essentially operational documents which have to be applied and understood by military personnel and their units in complex and sometimes lethal situations (Hosang, 2017). Below are some of the specific standard operating code and rules of engagement of the Nigeria military, set out to achieve military objectives in furtherance of government policy.

- I. When engaged in internal security coordination the military are to be conscious of their responsibilities for adequate protection of lives and property, and to desist from taking sides. There are consequences should an officer is found violating the above rule. of their actions.
- II. No officer should aid or incite any act of arson, vandalism or unprofessional conduct. It said that when soldiers are deployed on any internal security operation, it is their duty to ensure the enforcement of law and order.
- III. It is inexcusable for troops to stand aside and watch the security situation deteriorate leading to loss of lives or damage to property without intervening. Such intervention should be strictly within the ambit of the code of conduct for internal security operations.
- IV. The principle of minimum force and proportionality must be applied at all times; whenever operational situation permits, every reasonable effort shall be made to control the situation through measures short of using force, including personal contact and negotiations; the use of lethal force shall only be resorted to if all other means to control the situation have failed.

In February 2016, an article titled “U.S. Military Rules of Engagement in Afghanistan Questioned” was published in the *Wall Street Journal*. In this article, an American military advisor commented, “we have the capacity to annihilate the (Taliban) threat, but because of the Rules of Engagement under the new mission, our hands are tied (Donati and Totakhil, 2016). This was a demonstration of U.S. operations under certain rules in Afghanistan during armed conflicts in the country. On the other hand, rarely are civilians’ rights respected, they are deliberately targeted during armed conflicts in violation of the international law (Bellal and Casey-Maslen, 2011). This scenario has become common in Africa. Nigerian military in particular, has over the years been caught operating outside Rules of Engagement, thereby resulting to killing of civilians, destruction of private

properties, raping of young girls and women, torturing of civilians etc. Considering the behaviour of the Nigerian military, one may argue that one primary element that should be understood is that, ab initio, the Nigerian military was originally established to protect the State (not the people). Starting from colonial Nigeria till date, the state-centric ideological loyalty of the armed forces in Nigeria has not been altered. By this, the opaque habits of the Nigerian armed forces are cultural remnants of the decades Nigeria spent under military rule that have been preserved by contemporary military and civilian leaders keen to forestall outside scrutiny of their activities (Manea and Rüländ, 2012). In protecting the state, observing rules of engagement assumes to be the last option. The standard operating procedures (SOPs) for the protection of the civilians is far from the reality. In this regard, there is a wide difference between where the military is, and where it should be with regard to the protection of civilians (Dietrich, 2015).

The history of Nigerian security forces has been characterised by cases of serious human rights abuses, and the governments have often been accused of treating human rights abuses orchestrated by the security forces with laxity. The return of Nigeria to democracy has more or less exposed security forces to various weighty cases of human rights violations. In this regard, there has been series of public discourse concerning civil-military relations in the country. Arguably, there are evidences pointing to persistent gaps in civil-military relations. In other words, the military's poor relations with civilians are of immense concern to both local and international communities. This is because of high profile human rights abuses in Nigeria, as exemplified in recallable cases such as human rights violations in Ogoniland and other Niger Delta communities during military rule, the massacre in Odi, Bayelsa state (1999) and Zaki Biam, Benue state (2001) by the military under the watch and supervision of Obasanjo administration; the extrajudicial killings of suspected Boko Haram insurgents in the north east. One of the most horrific mass extrajudicial executions by the military happened on 14 March 2014 in Maiduguri, Borno state (Amnesty International, 2015). This mass execution of 640 men and boys followed Boko Haram attack on the military detention facility at Giwa barracks leading to the escape of detainees. After the recapture of some escaped detainees, it was reported that the military extra-judicially killed them (Amnesty International, 2015).

Also, the killing of members of the Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN) and IPOB separatist agitators in the south east, as well as frequent reports of soldiers assaulting and humiliating civilians. All these and others have often led to frozen relationships, and negative attitudinal dispositions of the public toward the military and paramilitary forces whom are perceived as institutionalized enemies of the citizens. According to survey research conducted by Dietrich (2015), the views of all respondents pointed that Nigeria's security forces have fallen short in three major ways. They have: 1) failed to protect vulnerable communities from violence; 2) failed to prevent collateral damage during operations; and 3) directly targeted civilians with unlawful detention, harassment, destruction of property, sexual violence, indiscriminate targeting of groups, torture, and

excessive use of force causing injury and death. The above stated situations are generally outside the principle guiding rule of engagement within military cycle. Sadly, successive Nigerian administrations have inadequately held human rights abusers accountable and answerable.

Going by the level of human rights abuses, in 2007, the U.N. Special Rapporteur on Torture reported that “torture is an intrinsic part of how law enforcement services operate within the country,” and called on the Nigerian government to criminalize the practice (United Nations Press Release, 2007: 47). The State Department’s annual human rights reports document numerous instances of “politically motivated and extrajudicial killings by security forces, including summary executions ... torture, rape and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment of prisoners, detainees, and criminal suspects,” and a variety of other offenses (Ploch, 2012: 16). It has been widely observed and reported that in Nigeria, any efforts by the security operatives (both military and police) to stop civil unrest or violent conflicts are usually geared towards the deployment of excessive force against civilians. The army’s training on rules of engagement has not reflected in any form of convergence with respect for human rights principles.

Table 1: Some Cases of Extra-Judicial Killings in Nigeria from 1999-2020

1	Odi, Bayelsa State massacre	On the 20th of November, 1999, defenseless and unarmed civilians were massacred by the Nigerian military over 2,500 lives were lost (Human Rights Watch, (HRW),
2	Zaki-Biam, Benue State massacre	On the 26th of October, 2001, villagers were said to have been rounded up by the Nigerian soldiers where not less than 200 civilian men who were separated from the women were shot dead and set ablaze.
3	Afara-Ukwu, Abia State killings	On the 14th of September, 2017, python dance 11 by Nigerian Soldiers at Nnamdi Kanu's, (the leader of Indigenous people of Biafra-IPOB) Palace at Afara Ukwu Umuahia, killing no fewer than 28 young innocent citizens.
4	Lekki Toll Gate, Lagos State killings	On the night of 20th October 2020, members of the Nigerian Army opened fire on unarmed End SARS protesters at the Lekki toll gate in Lagos State, killing not less than 30 people leaving many injured.
5	Zaria, Kaduna State massacre	On the 12th of December, 2015, the Nigerian Army in Zaria, Kaduna State, killed unarmed Shia Muslims, mostly members of the Islamic Movement in Nigeria. At least 348 civilians lost their lives in the attack.
6	Baga, Borno State massacre	On the 16th of April, 2013, the Nigerian military massacred as many as 200 civilians, and many were

		injured, and over 2,000 houses in the village of Baga, Borno State destroyed.
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Source: Compiled by the authors

Odi Massacre in 1999

A militia group in Odi, Bayalsa state, Niger Delta region of Nigeria was accused in 1999 to have kidnapped and killed 12 policemen (Ojo, 2002). The group was perceived to have carried out the act as a reaction to long years of socio-economic marginalisation and deprivation, as well as environmental degradation. As argued by Obikaeze, Adi, Agboola and Kayode (2022) over the years, the crude oil producing communities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria have been poorly defended as a result of human induced environmental security threats that have continued to lead to low fishing prospect for the local people (see also Ojo, 2002; Ukiwo, 2003). As a result of the murder of the police officers, the Federal Government of Nigeria under the leadership of the former President, Olusegun Obasanjo ordered the deployment of the military to Odi. The soldiers deployed failed to observe rules of engagement in their operations, thus engaged in destruction of properties and killing of defenceless civilians in Odi. Commenting on the situation, Adisa (2018) stated that the 2 days of unstopped bombardment of Odi community left many innocent lives and household properties destroyed. The soldiers employed various instruments of destruction such as bazooka, the General Purpose Machine Gun with a capacity of 50 rounds of ammunition, and FN Rifle with Capacity of 25 rounds of ammunition and hand grenade (Ojo, 2002). Apart from destruction of lives and properties, it was reported that the official operations of the military in the mission was also accompanied with rapes of women and girls (Ekine, in Segun, Gberevbie, and Onor, 2021).

Zaki-Biam Massacre in 2001

In 2001, violent conflict broke out between the Tivs of Benue state and Jukuns of Taraba State. In an attempt to control the situation, Olusegun Obasanjo-led Federal Government ordered the deployment of troops to the warring area. Trying to prosecute the mission, it was alleged that 19 soldiers were killed by the Tivs from Zaki-Biam (Ukiwo, 2003) because there was an allegation that soldiers were involved in partisanship with Jukuns during the armed conflict. This accusation of connivance was due to the fact that General Victor Malu, a Tiv by ethnic group, from Zaki-Biam who was the then Chief of Army Staff had just been removed from his position by the then Minister of Defense General (Rtd) Theophilus Danjuma, who is of Jukun ethnic group of Taraba State (Ukiwo, 2003). As a result of the killing of soldiers, the military personnel had to engage in a retaliatory mission against the people of Zaki-Biam, which resulted to massacre of more than 200 Tiv by the Nigerian soldiers (Anifowose, 2003).

Baga Town Killings in 2013

After a military patrol was attacked, a soldier was killed and five others seriously wounded, the Nigerian military embarked on a reprisal attack against people of Baga town in Maiduguri, Borno State. Boko Haram insurgents were accused of being responsible for the above stated attack. In a revengeful mission by the Nigerian military, in search of the sect members, they raided Baga town killing civilians and destroying civilian property. The aggressive and revengeful attack was carried out against Baga town because it was alleged that the said place was harbouring Boko Haram terrorists, thus, it should be dealt with seriously. Carrying out the assignment, it was alleged that the military set more than 2,000 homes ablaze and killed not less than 200 civilians (Didymus, 2013). It was then that President-General of the Jama'atu Nasril Islam and Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Muhammed Sa'adu Abubakar demanded that the military should always adhere to rule of engagement as a guiding professional principle of the security agencies in their official interventions or operations (Didymus, 2013). Beyond Baga case, the residents of the Boko Haram enclaves Yobe and Borno states lamented that most victims of Boko Haram counter-insurgency are innocent civilians killed either by police or army (Amnesty International, 2014). It has been alleged that the Joint Task Force (JTF) against Boko Haram sect is involved in different kinds of atrocities and blatant human rights violations.

The Shiites Massacre, Zaria in 2015

The Shiite population in Nigeria who are followers of Sheik El-Zakzaky have their own radical belief and interpretation of Islam. Based on this, they have in different occasions had physical clashes with other Islamic faithful and security agencies. For instance, in September 2009, El-Zakzaky group clashed with police in Zaria, leading to loss of lives from both sides (Shadjareh & Choudhury, 2014). In July 2014, there was a clash between the group and the Nigerian soldiers which led to the death of not less than 35 members of the group. Apart from that, in the past since 1980s when the group became popular in Nigeria, it had had confrontations with the security personnel. In 2015, the former Nigeria's Chief of Army Staff, Lieutenant General Tukur Buratai was on his way to pay homage to Emir of Zazzau and also to stop by to attend a review parade by 73 Regular Recruit at the Zaria military Depot of the Nigerian Army. The road was barricaded by El-Zakzaky's group with different objects such as tires, heavy stones, bonfires and so forth. The group members were armed with cutlasses and other weapons other than armed fire. This made the Nigerian soldiers to respond violently by killing more than 1, 000 (Amnesty International, 2016). The summary is that the military committed serious human rights violation in every encounter it had with the group.

The Killing of IPOB Members in 2017

The Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) under the leadership of Nnamdi Kalu has been agitating for self-determination and freedom from the Nigerian entity. The group adopts

peaceful approach in their demand for self-actualisation. Despite this, the Nigeria government seems not to be at home with the existence and operation of IPOB, and has branded the separatist agitators “troublemakers,” “terrorists” “enemies to peace.” According to Amnesty International (2016), the Nigerian security agencies have killed “at least 150 members and supporters of IPOB and injured hundreds during non-violent meetings, marches and other gatherings. The recent 2017 deployment of the army under the umbrella of ‘operation python dance 11’ is a typical illustration of intimidation and human right violation orchestrated by the federal government of Nigeria. On the 14th of September, 2017, there was python dance 11 by Nigerian Soldiers at Nnamdi Kanu's, Palace at Afaraukwu Umuahia, killing no fewer than 28 young innocent citizens. The killing was totally condemned by human rights activists, Amnesty International, pro-Biafran individuals. During the military invasion at Nnamdi Kanu’s house, it was alleged that the military looted Nnamdi Kanu’s family house at Afaraukwu (Chiedozie, 2017). Actually, what took place in Afaraukwu on that fateful day was classified as a blatant violation of human rights, as well as a direct negation of military rules of engagement in civilised states.

In fact, the Nigerian military operations that took place in Odi, Zaki-Biam, Baga, Zaria, Afaraukwu obviously contravene international humanitarian law such as Geneva Convention of 1949 and additional protocols, United Nations universal human rights declaration of 1948 as well as the 'section 33' of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as amended which provides: "that every person shall be entitled to life and no one shall be" deprived intentionally of his life, save in the execution of a sentence of a court in respect of a criminal offence of which he has been found guilty of in Nigeria.”

The psychology of the security personnel has far-reaching effects in their relationship with the civilians. Even during conflicts and operations of the Nigerian military, the media is not safe. The reports of the media concerning the real situation (when it is related to human rights abuses), is condemned by the Senior Officers of the Armed Forces. There have been cases of human rights violations of the journalists who are perceived intruders into what should be kept secret by the military. There have been instances of physical attacks against the media by the army personnel. For instance, in September 2016, soldiers and officers of the State Security Services allegedly stripped and beat ten journalists and media workers with barbed wire before arresting them. In 2017, in Abia state, the military beat and broke the cameras of media officers in their attempt to cover their operational activities. The hostile and brutal dispositions of the Nigerian military are steadily reinforced by their culture of supremacy over others.

Conclusion

The Nigeria-U.S. military relations are expected to have impact on the expertise and professionalism of the Nigerian military. U.S. is a superpower that possesses sophisticated instruments of force but usually try to observe rules of engagement while trying to maintain peace. The U.S. has provided military assistance to Nigeria in different ways such as

professional training, military equipment, democratic orientation and so on. It is by the U.S.-Nigeria military cooperation the Nigerian military forces are sent to U.S. for study and training. After many years of military cooperation between the two countries, empirical evidences have pointed to the fact that the Nigerian military seems to be totally divorced from whatever training they must have acquired in their relationship with the U.S. The operational principles of the Nigerian military contradict, in practical terms, its rules of engagement during peace keeping or management of internal conflict situations.

In the process of providing security, the Nigerian armed forces contribute to insecurity of life and property as exemplified in the above analyses of civil-military relations. The level of aggressiveness the Nigerian military exhibits while on official mission to restore peace and order is quite worrisome. The Nigerian military adopts intimidating and dehumanising approaches to prove to civilians that they have monopoly use of instrument of destruction. They are directly engaged in high profile human right violations despite public outcries. The case of Odi, Afaraukwu, Zaki-Biam, Baga killings, attest to this.

The character of the Nigerian military is a clear reflection of the character of the Nigerian state, which has been autocratic and oppressive. Over the years, the character of Nigerian state remains unchanged and the political elites resist change by all means. It is in view of this that the Nigerian military resists change despite military relations between Nigeria and U.S. Providing professional training to the Nigerian military is one thing, adhering to the rules of engagement which one of the cardinal principles of military training is another thing. This is the case with Nigeria. Professional orientation for the Nigerian military is a continues process which has the likelihood of changing the mind-set of men and women of the security agencies in general. However, the paper argues that the orientation and behavioural patterns of the Nigerian military would remain unchanged until the character of the Nigerian state changes. There must be a strong recall of rule of law by establishing strong institutions where the justice system in Nigeria is viable enough to control the state itself, not the other way round. Absence of effective rule of law in Nigeria arguably emboldens security personnel, the military in particular, to perpetuate colossal human rights violations with impunity. And the Nigerian state provides shield to the perpetrators of unlawful torture, killing, rape and so forth. Owing to the situation on ground, the sovereignty of the Nigerian state should be redefined by the people through exercise of sovereignty over the state.

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