

# Reforms in the Nigerian Police Force

## The Problem

The Nigeria Police Force is statutorily charged with the responsibility of maintaining law and order, prevention and detection of crime, protection of life and property and the enforcement of law and order. During the colonial and post colonial Governments, the Police was used for order maintenance that engendered repression, a culture of impunity, corruption, incivility, brutality, lack of transparency and accountability.

The deplorable condition of the Police continued during the 30 years of military rule in Nigeria. There were acute underfunding, shortage of office and barrack accommodation, salaries was meager, allowances were not paid. Above all, there was abuse of fundamental human rights of citizens, while impunity was the order of the day. The Police therefore failed in its statutory responsibility to the citizenry and confidence was totally eroded. The situation was further compounded by the military government assenting to needless proliferation of parallel security agencies in the country. These include the Economic and Financial Crime Commission; Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission, Federal Road Safety Commission, Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corps, Nigeria Drugs Law Enforcement Agency, etc. Consequently, the scarce resources that could have been used to strengthen the various organs of the Nigeria Police Force for effective performance were expended in creating and sustaining these new agencies.

Since 1994, various attempts by Governments were made to examine these problems with a view to reforming the Nigeria Police Force through the establishment of various panels and Committees, which made recommendations for reforms. Unfortunately, most of the recommendations were not implemented. However, the MD Yusuf Committee, 2008 under the President Umaru Musa Yaradua's Administration marked the beginning of a new era for the Nigeria Police Force. The late President Umaru Musa Yaradua, had reiterated that "this government will not relent in its commitment to transform the Nigeria Police Force into a highly Modern and Responsive Force." The Goodluck Ebele Jonathan Government continued in this regard to set up the Parry Osayande Presidential Committee on the Re-organization of the Nigeria Police Force in 2012 with 80% acceptance of its recommendations. It is worthy to note that there has been a significant improvement in the Nigeria Police Force since 2009. The panels and Committees that have worked on Police Reforms in Nigeria are:

- a. M.D. Yusuf Panel to Reform and Re-Organize the Nigeria Police Force, 1994
- b. Danmadami Committee on Police Reforms, 2006
- c. M. D. Yusuf Presidential Committee on the Reform of the Nigeria Police Force, 2008
- d. Parry B. O. Osayande Presidential Committee on the Re-organization of the Nigeria Police Force, 2012

## Reform Actions

Consequent upon the research and findings of the various panels and committees, recommendations were made to Government towards improving the Force. The Government in its white paper had accepted most of the recommendations, which constitute the reform actions in the following key areas:

### 1. **Effective implementation of Policies for the Police Force:**

A dedicated Police Reform Office should be established and provided with all the necessary resources and facilities to guide and monitor the implementation of all the approved recommendations of government white papers on Police reforms within a given time frame of two (2) years.

The Government should immediately produce a comprehensive National Police Reform Policy that clearly articulates and defines the role of the Police in the polity. The major objective of the policy will be to achieve functional responsibility for the Force while enhancing its accountability and effective governance.

The Police Council should be institutionalized so that it meets regularly and participate effectively in the management and funding of the Force.

### 2. **Adequate Funding for the Police:** The Police Force should be well funded, be self accounting and in total control of their budget as against the Ministry of Police Affairs controlling their budget. All Police Zones, Commands and Formations should be involved in providing inputs into the budgetary process according to their needs.

### 3. **Decent Office and Residential Accommodation for Police:** New and modern Police office complexes designed with security in mind should be built at the State, Division, Command and detachment level as expeditiously as possible.

All dormitories in all the training institutions should be renovated and furnished with beds, mattresses, pillows and adequate toilet facilities.

### 4. **Effective Police Operation:** The Force Intelligence should be revamped for better performance and the operatives should be spread across the Country.

- Intelligence gathering technology aids should be procured for the Nigeria Police.
- A major Police criminal data base should be set up at the National level with links to State Commands and other Government agencies responsible for the administration of criminal justice.
- The rules and regulations governing the deployment of Police orderlies to eligible individuals as approved by Mr. President should be strictly adhered to and any violation should be severely sanctioned.
- To ensure operational effectiveness, 85% of Police personnel should be made up of operational agents, while 15% is made up of specialists and other supporting/ auxiliary staff.
- There should be harmonious interaction between the Inspector- General of Police and the Police Service Commission.

### 5. **Enforcement of the Various Rules:** These include the Public Service Rules, the Financial Regulations, the Police Force Regulations and Force Orders. Others are the Police Service Commission Guidelines on Appointment, Promotion and Discipline in the NPF as well as the Code of Conduct for Police Officers on Election duties.

6. **Advisory Council for the Police Colleges:** The four Police colleges namely Ikeja, Kaduna, Maiduguri, Oji River, and Police Detective College Enugu as well as the two proposed colleges at Benin and Lafia should have one Advisory Council. This is necessary to ensure uniformity of standards.
7. **Recruitment in the Force:** In order to ensure that matters of recruitment, career management and discipline are handled efficiently with dispatch, the Government should do all that is required to build the facilities and executive capacity of the Commission.  
The Police Service Commission should put in place strict Guidelines on Recruitment into the Nigeria Police in line with the Force Regulations.
8. **Promotion in the Force:** The Police Service Commission should ensure the clearance of all backlogs of promotion in the Force. Promotion should be an annual exercise for all deserving Officers in accordance with the criteria adopted by the Police Service Commission.  
The Inspector-General of Police should establish Promotion Boards at state and zonal levels, staff training institutions and Police colleges as well as formations to follow strictly the laid down procedure established by the Police Service Commission and Force Order.  
The Police should decentralize the promotion of junior ranks and base them on seniority, merit, passing of prescribed examinations, good annual reports and subject to availability of vacancies.
9. **Discipline in the Police Force:** A sound system of addressing public complaints and enhancing police accountability to the people at every level should be established.  
The Police Service Commission, the Public Complaints Commission, and other oversight Agencies should play a more proactive monitoring role over the Police in order to improve the level of public confidence in their activities.
10. **Adequate Training for the Police:** The Police Service Commission should ensure that only those screened and adjudged suitable for training are admitted into the training colleges.  
Human Right training should be included in the curriculum at Police Colleges.

## Main Achievements

The following are some of the achievements recorded as a fall out of the reforms processes put in place since the return to Democratic rule in 1999.

- Funding for the Police has improved and approval has been given for Police to be self accounting and in control of their budget. The Federal, State and the Local Government now contribute to funding the Police. The salaries and uniforms have improved significantly.
- Some Police Barracks and offices have been renovated across the country
- The Police Service Commission has established a recruitment Board which has put in place an upgraded Guideline for Recruitment into the Police in line with the reforms recommendations. These guidelines were strictly adhered to during the last recruitment exercise.

- The PSC has also put in place Guidelines on Promotion and Discipline for the NPF as well as a Code of Conduct for Police personnel on Electoral Duties.
- The Police Service Commission has developed the Schemes of Service for the Specialist cadre in the Nigeria Police Force.
- A Human Rights Desk has been established at the Force Headquarters and the various State Commands.
- In line with the recommendation of the reforms, the Police Service Commission has cleared all the backlog of promotion of officers after they completed the prescribed courses and examination.
- The Police Service Commission has formulated three key policies aimed at the efficiency and discipline in the Nigeria Police Force. These policies are Domestic Violence Policy, Gender Policy, In-Custody Death Policy.
- The relationship between the Police High Command and the Police Service Commission has improved significantly especially through the Biennial Retreat of the Commission.
- The promotion courses and examination syllabi/course compendium for the Nigeria Police, from Police Constable to Assistant Inspector-General of Police approved by the Police Service Commission has been put to use in the training institutions.
- Police Community Relations Committee (PCRC) nationwide has become functional and more effective as a platform for interface between the Police and public and some of their resolutions are being expeditiously implemented.
- Medical and polygraph tests are now being used as a means of identifying and removing drug and alcoholic-dependent persons during recruitment into the Police and even among serving officers.
- In line with the reform recommendations, Government has since established a Police University located within the Police Academy Wudil, Kano State. The Police Service Commission has admitted two(2) sets of cadets into the University.
- The Police Service Commission has recruited Specialists into the Nigeria Police Force in line with the reforms directive. These are ICT professionals, Finger-print and Forensic Experts, Medical Personnel, Engineers, Technicians, Police Air-wing Pilots, etc.

## Key Challenges

The key Challenges in implementing the Police reforms are grouped under the following headings:

1. **ADMINISTRATION:** Implementation failure, political will and commitment as well as policy in-coherence.

- Disconnect between the functional Departments of the Force Headquarters, Zonal and State Commands.

2. **POOR FUNDING** Inadequate Police funding and misapplication of funds by the authorities at all levels.
  - Poor funding for the Police Service Commission to carry out its Constitutional mandate and the responsibilities ascribed to it by the various Government White Papers on Police Reforms. This has also hindered the early completion of the Corporate Head Office of the Commission.
3. **OPERATIONS** Inadequate Police deployment to the rural areas and absence of effective police patrol duties.
  - Lack of forensic crime laboratories to support investigation.
  - Lack of a comprehensive criminal database and Crime Statistics Bureau.
  - Illegal deployment and utilization of Police manpower.
  - Poor use of Information and Communication Technology.
4. **MISCONDUCT** Drug and alcohol abuse among Police personnel especially Rank and File.
5. **CORRUPTION IN THE SYSTEM** Systematic and pervasive corruption in the Nigerian society has left the Nigeria Police Force with its own share.

### Assessment Of Reform Initiative.

S/N	Assessment Criteria	Result of Assessment
1.	Have the reforms improved the quality of the public service delivery?	Yes, The Police is now friendlier to the public than before. Police conduct at elections has been commended in the recent past.
2.	Do more people now have access to services, including disadvantaged groups such as women, young persons and people with disabilities?	There have been substantial improvement especially in the exercise of rights and freedom of association by the citizenry.
3.	Have the reforms reduced the cost of governance?	No. Instead the reforms are capital intensive.
4.	Have the reforms made the service more affordable for citizens?	No.
5.	Have the reforms reduced corruption?	Only to an some extent. The conduct of police personnel on election duties and at check points have marginally improved but there is still a widely held perception of corruption in the police.
6.	Have the reforms reduced unnecessary bureaucracy and red tape?	No. There is minimal achievement in this area.
7.	Are the reforms initiatives likely to lead to improved development outcomes?	Yes

8.	Are things improving, staying the same, or getting worse?	Things have improved appreciably but there is still a long way to go.
9.	Where things are improving, will those improvements endure?	Yes, they will with determination on the part of the Government and Stakeholders in the management of the Nigeria Police.
10.	Where things are not improving, what should be done?	Continuous evaluation and re-evaluation to ensure compliance with approved standards.

## Proposed Next Steps

- The roles and mandate of stakeholders in the implementation of the Police reforms are clearly stated. It is important that each organization understands its mandate and develops strategies for implementing them.
- Implementation of policies requires political will, commitment and cooperation of all to adhere to guidelines and the capacity to put in place monitoring mechanisms to checkmate abuses of the process.
- The reform process is underpinned by the need for the organizations involved especially the Police Service Commission, The Ministry of Police Affairs and the Nigeria Police Force to cooperate and work in a harmonious relationship.
- The Police Service Commission in compliance with its establishment Act 2001, is in the process of presenting for the first time an annual expenditure estimate for 2015 to Mr President. This will enable the Commission carry out its constitutional mandate and ensure continuity with the ongoing reforms to consolidate the gains recorded in the last few years of implementing the reforms.
- Strengthening the collaboration between the Stakeholders in Police oversight. These are the Civil Society Organizations, the Ministry of Police Affairs, the National Human Rights Commission, the Public Complaints Commission as well as the Public.