

**COMMUNITY SECURITY, POLITICAL ECONOMY AND CONFLICT-SENSITIVE
RESPONSE IN YORUBALAND:
A POSITION PAPER ON INSECURITY, LEADERSHIP ACCOUNTABILITY AND
INSTITUTIONAL REFORM**

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Abstract

The persistence of banditry, kidnapping and herdsmen-related violence in Yorubaland reflects a combination of institutional gaps, inconsistent political will, and failure to integrate community security assets within a lawful framework. This paper analyzes the structural and political economy factors behind the crisis, reviews the performance of sub-national security outfits such as Amotekun, and rejects self-help arming as a response. Drawing on the 1999 Constitution, the Firearms Act, and twelve monographs by Barrister Adebayo Akinade, the paper proposes a conflict-sensitive model centered on state policing with national standards, intelligence-led community security, depoliticized integration of local assets, and strategic communication.

Keywords: Insecurity, Amotekun, State Policing, Community Security, Conflict Prevention, Yorubaland

1. Introduction

Since 2009, Nigeria has experienced a progressive expansion of armed non-state actors into rural and peri-urban areas, including parts of Yorubaland. The failure to contain herdsmen criminality in the 2010s, the emergence of kidnapping as an organized enterprise, and the inconsistent response of state and non-state actors have created a security deficit. This paper examines the institutional, political and operational factors behind the deficit and outlines a lawful, evidence-based response.

2. Methodology

The analysis uses historical policy review, doctrinal legal analysis of the 1999 Constitution and Firearms Act, and conflict-sensitive program design. It draws on Akinade's twelve monographs on security operations, community policing, documentation, agrosecurity, and communal conflict prevention.

3. Structural and Political Economy Factors

Three factors explain the persistence of insecurity in Yorubaland:

A. Political Accommodation over Prosecution

In the early phases of herdsmen violence, political and business interests led some leaders to frame criminality as cultural conflict requiring accommodation rather than law enforcement. This eroded deterrence and signaled low cost to perpetrators.

B. Fragmented and Under-Resourced Sub-National Security

Amotekun was created in 2020 to address intelligence and response gaps. However, inconsistent funding, unclear command relationships with the Nigeria Police Force, and absence from the formal intelligence cycle have limited its effectiveness. The non-activation of reported drone and command center capabilities during the May 2026 Oriire abductions illustrates this gap.

C. Depoliticization Failure

Attempts by individuals and some governors to confront criminality were met with political isolation rather than institutional support. This weakened the emergence of a unified regional security response.

4. The Failure of Self-Help Arming as Policy

Calls for communities to arm themselves contradict Section 3 of the Firearms Act Cap F28 LFN 2004, which prohibits possession of firearms without presidential license. Self-help arming:

1. Creates reciprocal violence and identity-based conflict
2. Destroys evidence and undermines prosecutions
3. Weakens the state's monopoly of legitimate force

Akinade's Communal Conflict and Violence: Response, Resolution and Prevention shows that such actions convert criminal incidents into communal conflicts that are harder to resolve.

5. Categories Lawfully Permitted to Possess Arms in Nigeria

A. State Security Agencies: Nigeria Police Force, Armed Forces, Department of State Services, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, and other statutory agencies for official duties.

B. Licensed Private Security Organisations: Companies licensed by the Nigeria Police Force for armed protection of clients and assets.

C. Licensed Individuals: The President may grant licenses for self-defence, sport, hunting, or collection after background checks, medical evaluation, and demonstrated need.

D. Traditional Institutions: Limited ceremonial firearms under historical licenses.

6. The Correct Response Framework

A. State Policing with National Standards

Phase the establishment of state police units with certification, training, equipment, and civilian oversight. Akinade's Managing Strategic Security and Crime Prevention Models outlines sequencing to avoid abuse and ensure interoperability with federal agencies.

B. Intelligence-Led Community Security

Integrate Amotekun, hunters, Agbekoyas, and community watch groups into the state intelligence cycle. Licensing, training, and command protocols are required to prevent duplication and abuse, as detailed in Public Policing and Private Protection for Maximum Security.

C. Depoliticized Use of Local Expertise

Retired security personnel and community-based actors with operational knowledge should be engaged formally for intelligence, training, and advisory roles, not as parallel armed groups.

D. Strategic Communication

Maintain a public posture of non-negotiation with kidnappers. Use single incident command for public statements to avoid signaling concession and creating moral hazard. See Communications in Security and Law Enforcement Operations.

E. Technology and Documentation

Deploy digital surveillance and drone capabilities under clear operational protocols. Apply Akinade's documentation standards to ensure evidence admissibility and accountability.

7. Role of Traditional Institutions and Political Leadership

Obas and traditional rulers hold legitimacy for early warning and mediation. Their effectiveness depends on unity, data-sharing, and avoidance of superiority contests. Governors must speak with one voice on security policy and commit sustained funding to sub-national security outfits.

8. Recommendations

1. Commit to phased state policing with mandatory certification and oversight.
2. Reorganize and fund Amotekun to integrate it into the state intelligence architecture with joint operations protocols.
3. Establish a South-West Security Coordination Council comprising governors, traditional rulers, and retired security professionals for intelligence sharing and joint planning.

4. Depoliticize community security assets through licensing and command frameworks.
5. Invest in digital surveillance and command centers and ensure they are operational and integrated with field units.
6. Create a Victim Support Fund to address humanitarian needs without creating incentives for abduction.
7. Conduct quarterly security audits of rural LGAs and publish findings for public accountability.

9. Conclusion

The wave of insecurity in Yorubaland is not inevitable. It reflects institutional gaps and inconsistent political will. The lawful path forward lies in building state policing capacity, integrating community assets under accountable frameworks, and maintaining strategic communication that denies criminal enterprises the incentives they seek. The frameworks in Akinade's published works provide the operational and policy basis for this transition.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Model Charter for South-West Security Coordination Council

Appendix B: Licensing and Integration Framework for Community Security Assets

Appendix C: Early Warning Indicators for Rural and School Protection

Appendix D: Protocol for Strategic Communication During Hostage Crises

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