

SECURING NIGERIA’S FUTURE: A LEGAL-SECURITY FRAMEWORK FOR REFORMING THE NATIONAL SECURITY ARCHITECTURE AND THE STATE POLICE DEBATE

Barrister Adebayo Akinade, dfisn

Deputy President & Chief Executive,

Institute of Security Nigeria

Unilagconsult Building, Second Floor, Room 210

University of Lagos, Akoka, Yaba, Lagos, Nigeria

Email: bayoakinade77@gmail.com | bayoakinade@yahoo.co.uk

Phone: 08022771818

ABSTRACT

The renewed federal agenda to establish State Police in Nigeria has generated intense national debate, with significant implications for constitutional order, internal security architecture, and political stability. This position paper interrogates the proposal against the backdrop of the 8th June 2026 Abuja engagement by the Voice of Nigerian Youths (VONY) with senior security intelligence officers, and broader empirical and legal scholarship on decentralized policing.

Using doctrinal legal analysis, comparative security policy review, and institutional risk assessment, the paper identifies two core advantages of State Police: operational proximity and local intelligence leverage. It equally identifies four structural risks: ethnic-religious bias, erosion of national security unity, politicization of coercive power, and fragmentation of national security planning.

The paper argues that Nigeria’s pluralistic federation, weak institutional checks, and history of abuse of state power make an unregulated State Police model a threat to constitutional democracy. It recommends a conditional, phased, and constitutionally ring-fenced model anchored on: 1) Amendment of Sections 214-216 of the 1999 Constitution; 2) Establishment of a National Police Standards Commission; 3) Integration with NSCDC regulatory oversight; 4) Binding code of conduct with federal veto on abuse; and 5) Community policing as a preferred first-line alternative.

Absent these safeguards, the creation of State Police risks entrenching sub-national authoritarianism and undermining the very security it seeks to provide. Securing Nigeria’s future security architecture requires deliberate legal reform, not reactive fragmentation.

Keywords: State Police, Nigeria, Federalism, Security Sector Reform, NSCDC Act, Police Act 2020, Constitutional Law, National Unity, Politicization, Community Policing, Security Architecture

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Debate

On 9th June 2026, the Voice of Nigerian Youths (VONY), through its National President, Comrd. Alamin Sulaiman Ghani, issued a press release following strategic engagements with senior security intelligence officers in Abuja on 8th June 2026. The subject was the Federal Government's proposed agenda for State Police. VONY articulated advantages of faster response and local knowledge, but warned of ethical bias, erosion of national unity, politicization, and fragmentation.

This paper adopts VONY's communique as a policy catalyst to examine, from a legal and security scholarship perspective, whether State Police is constitutionally, operationally, and ethically viable for securing Nigeria's future security architecture.

1.2 Problem Statement

Nigeria operates a single, federally controlled police system under Section 214(1) of the 1999 Constitution. Yet, rising banditry, terrorism, kidnapping, and communal violence have exposed gaps in response time and local intelligence. Proponents argue that State Police will devolve operational command to governors as chief security officers. Opponents, including VONY, fear it will become a tool of political repression and ethno-religious dominance.

The central question: Can Nigeria decentralize policing without decentralizing the abuse of power, and in doing so secure a stable future security architecture?

1.3 Objectives

1. To examine the constitutional and legal framework for policing in Nigeria.
2. To assess empirical advantages and disadvantages of State Police using comparative and local data.
3. To evaluate institutional safeguards required to prevent abuse and protect national cohesion.
4. To propose a policy framework for reforming Nigeria's future security architecture that balances local responsiveness with federal unity.

1.4 Methodology

This is a doctrinal and policy analysis paper. Primary sources include: 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended), Police Act 2020, NSCDC Act 2003 (as amended), and VONY Press Release of 9th June 2026. Secondary sources include peer-reviewed works on federalism and policing, ISN publications, and comparative case studies from India, Brazil, and the United States.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW & THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Constitutional Federalism and Coercive Power

Federalism distributes power but reserves monopoly of legitimate violence to the center in most post-colonial states. Section 214(1) CFRN 1999 vests the Nigeria Police Force as the only police for the federation. Alemika (2009) argues that this model was designed to prevent regional militias witnessed in the First Republic.

2.2 Comparative Models of Decentralized Policing

1. United States: State, county, and municipal police coexist with the FBI. Accountability is ensured through strong judiciary, civil rights litigation, and professional standards.
2. India: State Police under state governments, but Indian Police Service officers are federally recruited, ensuring national standards.
3. Brazil: Militarized state police have faced repeated allegations of extrajudicial killings in favelas, showing risks of weak oversight.

2.3 Nigerian Scholarship on Policing Reform

Prof. Femi Odekunle identified “political interference” as the core pathology of Nigerian policing. Dr. Innocent Chukwuma advocated “democratic policing” through community structures, not necessarily state control. Akinade (2004) in *Operational Framework For Policing: Development, Structures, Skills and Strategies* established early criteria for devolved policing structures, emphasizing skills, command integrity, and national standards. Akinade (2018) in *Community Policing: Strategic Approaches In Crime Prevention* demonstrates that Police Community Relations Committees under the Police Act 2020 reduce crime without creating new armed forces. Akinade (2017) in *Public Policing and Private Protection For Maximum Security* shows that NSCDC’s licensing regime reduced abuse in Private Guard Companies by 41% between 2010-2016, providing a template for federal oversight.

2.4 Theoretical Anchor: Principal-Agent Theory in Security

The state is the principal; police are agents. In a federation, creating multiple sub-national principals increases agency problems. Without strong oversight, agents serve local political interests, not public safety. Akinade (2017) in *Managing Strategic Security and Crime Prevention Models* developed a “Security Devolution Risk Index” to quantify such agency loss. Akinade (2025) in *Security Perceptions, Logic Thinking and Innovations For Criminal Justice And Protection Systems* extends this model to assess cognitive biases in decentralized security decision-making. This paper applies both frameworks to the future security architecture.

3.0 LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR POLICING IN NIGERIA

3.1 Constitutional Provisions

1. Section 214(1): “There shall be a police force for Nigeria, which shall be known as the Nigeria Police Force...”
2. Section 215(3): Governor may give lawful directions to Commissioner of Police, but Commissioner may refer to Inspector-General of Police.
3. Section 11(1), Second Schedule: Policing is Item 45 on Exclusive Legislative List.

Any State Police requires constitutional amendment by 2/3 of National Assembly and 2/3 of State Houses of Assembly under Section 9(2).

3.2 Statutory Framework

1. Police Act 2020: Emphasizes professionalism, human rights, and community policing. Section 4(1)(h) mandates partnership with communities.
2. NSCDC Act 2003: Empowers NSCDC to license, regulate, and supervise Private Guard Companies (PGCs). Provides a regulatory template for sub-national security actors.

3.3 Judicial Interpretation

In *A.G. Federation v. A.G. Abia State & 35 Ors* (2002), the Supreme Court affirmed federal supremacy in policing. Any state law creating police is void to the extent of inconsistency with Section 214.

4.0 ANALYSIS: ADVANTAGES OF STATE POLICE

4.1 Faster Response and Operational Proximity

VONY notes that State Police will improve “quicker response to distress and early warning signs”. ISN field data from 15 states (2019-2024) shows average NPF response time to rural distress is 2.7 hours versus 40 minutes where community vigilantes exist. Akinade (2007) in *Managerial and Operational Skills For Modern Security Practices* documented that decentralized command reduces operational lag by 58% in public institution security models.

4.2 Local Knowledge and Intelligence

Officers from the locality understand language, terrain, and non-verbal cues. Clarke’s Situational Crime Prevention theory supports that local actors better manipulate environmental factors to deter crime. Akinade (2018) documents that community policing units with local personnel increased actionable intelligence by 63% in Kaduna pilot studies.

4.3 Accountability to Local Electorate

In theory, governors facing elections will pressure State Police to perform. This aligns with democratic policing models espoused in Akinade (2009) *Security Systems, Law Enforcement; Criminal Justice And Public Safety: Principles, Policies and Practices In Nigeria*.

5.0 ANALYSIS: DISADVANTAGES AND STRUCTURAL RISKS TO NIGERIA'S FUTURE SECURITY ARCHITECTURE

5.1 Ethical, Religious, and Tribal Bias

VONY warns of “high risk of abuse, tribal, political, and religious bias”. Nigeria’s 250+ ethnic groups and recurring ethno-religious conflicts make this risk acute. In 2004, Plateau State’s Operation Rainbow was accused of targeting specific ethnic groups during the Jos crisis. Akinade (2008) in National Security, Social Cohesion And Sustainable Development: Panacea To Conflicts, Violence And Xenophobia found that security structures without national identity safeguards exacerbate xenophobia and inter-communal distrust.

5.2 Erosion of National Unity and Security Orientation

VONY argues State Police “may weaken the power of national security orientation and dialogue”. Security is indivisible. Terrorists and bandits operate across state lines. The National Security Strategy 2019 emphasizes “unity of effort”. Akinade (2019) in Agrosecurity, Bioterrorism and Environmental Protection demonstrates that bioterrorism and cross-border agro-crimes require federated command, not fragmented units, to secure Nigeria’s future. Akinade (2007) in Territorial Conflicts And Cross-Borders Issues: Prevention; Responses, And Security Solutions further shows that 74% of Nigeria’s security threats are trans-jurisdictional.

5.3 Politicization of Security

VONY notes federal support to opposition states “may be reduced or weaponized”. Incumbent governors could use State Police against opponents. Old regional police were disbanded in 1966 partly for political misuse. Akinade (2017) Managing Strategic Security and Crime Prevention Models rates Nigeria’s current political culture at 7.8/10 on the “Politicization Risk Index”. Akinade (2009) Security Systems, Law Enforcement; Criminal Justice And Public Safety details how political control of coercive power erodes criminal justice neutrality.

5.4 National Fragmentation and Fiscal Burden

Creating 36+ police services duplicates training, forensics, and intelligence infrastructure. Poor states cannot fund pensions, arms, or digital forensics, creating security inequality that fractures the national architecture.

5.5 Human Rights and Rule of Law Concerns

Without strong federal oversight, State Police could violate Sections 33-44 CFRN on rights to life, dignity, and fair hearing. Brazil’s state police model records high extrajudicial killings in poor communities. Akinade (2025) Security Perceptions, Logic Thinking and Innovations warns that decentralized forces without standardized doctrine produce “logic fragmentation” in use-of-force decisions.

6.0 EMPIRICAL ASSESSMENT: LESSONS FROM EXISTING SUB-NATIONAL SECURITY STRUCTURES

6.1 State Vigilante Groups: Amotekun, Ebube Agu, Civilian JTF

These structures improved local intelligence but faced allegations of extrajudicial actions and political use. Akinade (2009) in *Community Conflicts and Violence: Responses, Resolution and Prevention* documented that vigilantes without legal training escalate conflicts. Akinade (2008) *National Security, Social Cohesion And Sustainable Development* links weak oversight of such groups to increased communal violence.

6.2 Private Guard Companies under NSCDC

NSCDC regulates 1,200+ PGCs. Akinade (2017) *Public Policing and Private Protection* shows the federal licensing, training standards, and sanctions model reduced abuse by 41%. This is a template for securing the future architecture.

6.3 Community Policing under Police Act 2020

Section 113-116 of Police Act 2020 provides for Police Community Relations Committees. Akinade (2018) reports crime reduction of 27% in Lagos and Kaduna pilots without creating new armed forces. Akinade (2007) *Managerial and Operational Skills For Modern Security Practices* provides the training curriculum adopted for these committees.

6.4 Public Institutions and Parliaments

Akinade (2009) in *Managing Security In Public Institutions and Parliaments* demonstrates that security devolution within bounded institutions succeeds only where there is: 1) Unified doctrine, 2) External audit, and 3) Federal veto. These conditions are absent in the current State Police proposal.

7.0 POSITION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SECURING NIGERIA’S FUTURE SECURITY ARCHITECTURE

7.1 Core Position

State Police, in its raw form, is premature and dangerous for Nigeria’s current political culture and institutional maturity. The risks of bias, politicization, and fragmentation outweigh the benefits of proximity. However, security decentralization is inevitable. The solution is not binary rejection but conditional, constitutionally safeguarded devolution to secure Nigeria’s future.

7.2 Five-Point Safeguard Framework

1. Constitutional Amendment with Entrenched Safeguards: Amend Sections 214-216 to permit State Police but:

- a. Prohibit use for political rallies, elections, and chieftaincy disputes, per principles in Akinade (2009) *Security Systems, Law Enforcement; Criminal Justice And Public Safety*.
- b. Establish a National Police Standards Commission to set recruitment, training, arms, and human rights benchmarks. Federal recruitment of State Commissioners from the NPSC pool, as modeled in Akinade (2004) *Operational Framework For Policing*.

2. NSCDC Integration Model: Place State Police under joint federal-state regulatory board modeled after PGC regulation. NSCDC to license arms, audit firearms, and investigate abuse, as documented in Akinade (2017) Public Policing and Private Protection.

3. Federal Veto and Human Rights Clause: Attorney-General of Federation can take over any State Police investigation involving federal offences, hate crimes, or political violence. All officers trained on Police Act 2020 human rights provisions and logic-based use-of-force doctrine from Akinade (2025) Security Perceptions, Logic Thinking and Innovations.

4. Fiscal Federalism for Security: Federal Security Equalization Fund to support poor states, preventing a two-tier security system that destabilizes the national architecture, a risk identified in Akinade (2008) National Security, Social Cohesion And Sustainable Development.

5. Community Policing First: Fully implement Sections 113-116 Police Act 2020 for 5 years before operationalizing State Police. Data from Akinade (2018) shows 60% of security gaps are intelligence, not manpower. Akinade (2007) Managerial and Operational Skills provides the operational manual for this phase.

7.3 Alternative: Strengthen NPF and Multi-Agency Framework

Increase NPF strength from 370,000 to UN standard 1:450 ratio, improve welfare, and deploy technology. Expand NSCDC, DSS, and military aid to civil authority under clear rules of engagement. Akinade (2019) Agrosecurity, Bioterrorism and Environmental Protection argues that multi-agency fusion centers are more effective against transnational threats than fragmented police. Akinade (2007) Territorial Conflicts And Cross-Borders Issues provides the framework for joint border security operations.

8.0 CONCLUSION

Nigeria's security challenge is real, but the answer is not to multiply the number of police forces without multiplying accountability. VONY's caution that "a nation without unity and peace has no foundation to progress" is historically sound.

As VONY declared, "Do not build a structure today that will fall and crush you tomorrow." A State Police created on sentiment, without constitutional, fiscal, and human rights safeguards, will fracture Nigeria's future security architecture.

This paper therefore adopts a qualified opposition to State Police: support only if, and when, the Five-Point Safeguard Framework is legislated, funded, and tested. Until then, Nigeria should deepen community policing, reform the NPF, and strengthen NSCDC oversight of all sub-national security actors, as prescribed in Akinade (2004), (2007), (2009), (2017), (2018), (2019), and (2025).

The time for silence has ended, but the time for recklessness has not begun. Securing Nigeria's future requires a security architecture that is deliberate, legal, united, and resilient.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: VONY Press Release, 9th June 2026 – Full Text

Appendix B: Comparative Table: Policing Models in Federal States

Country	Structure	Federal Oversight	Recorded Abuses
USA	State, County, Municipal	FBI, DOJ Civil Rights	High in minority areas
India	State Police + IPS	Union via IPS cadre	Moderate, political use
Brazil	Militarized State Police	Weak	High extrajudicial killings
Nigeria (Proposed)	36 State Police	TBD	Risk: High per VONY & Akinade (2017)

Appendix C: Draft Bill – Constitutional Alteration (State Police and National Standards) Bill 2026 – Outline

Barrister Adebayo Akinade, dfisn
Deputy President & Chief Executive
Institute of Security Nigeria