

# **ADVANCEMENT IN POLICING: ROLES OF CITIZENS IN COMMUNITY POLICING AND PROTECTION**

It is apposite to state that this topic is apt because we are in a time that there is insecurity globally while human beings are relying on Police to perform the needed magic.

Given this background, the word, Police should be enunciated. Police is defined as the civil force of a state responsible for maintaining public order. The commissioner of London metropolitan police in 1829 set out the primary functions of the police as:

1. The protection of life and property
2. The prevention and detection of crime
3. The preservation of order
4. The prosecution of offenders against peace

**THE 1999 CONSTITUTION OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA (AS AMENDED)** provides for the establishment of Nigerian Police in section 214.

(1) There shall be a Police force for Nigeria, which shall be known as the Nigeria Police force, and subject to the provisions of this section no other Police force shall be established for the federation or any part thereof.

(2)(b) The members of the Nigeria Police force shall have such powers and duties as may be conferred upon them by law. Ancillary to this provision of the constitution in section 4 of

Police acts 2020 which outlines the functions of the Police force as follows:

1. Protecting rights and freedoms
2. Preventing and detecting crime
3. Enforcing laws and regulations
4. Providing humanitarian assistance
5. Facilitating movement
6. Vetting and approving private detective schools
7. Performing military duties
8. Protecting lives and property

Having stated the above mentioned duties the Nigeria Police intandem with the global practice of policing, the late inspector general of Police (IGP) Tafa Balogun postulated eight points agenda as strategy for policing aimed at creating safer communities in Nigeria. Amongst his eight (8) points agenda is “Efforts to achieve co-operation and partnership with the public which gave birth to the concept of community based policing system coined as community policing.

### **DEFINITION OF COMMUNITY POLICING**

Community policing is a philosophy that guides Police management styles, policies, strategies, and operational performance. It requires active partnership between the Police and community also ensures that Police view their primary roles as the provision of quality service to the community, compelling the Police to adopt a problem solving approach to their operations and involve the public in deciding policing priorities.

Pursuant to Police resolve to ensuring discharge of their duty majorly, the protection of lives and property and the prevention and detection of crime in democratic society, successive Police authorities had evolved a more pragmatic and workable approach in policing which culminate to community policy.

## **CORE VALUES OF COMMUNITY POLICING**

In advent of the concept of community policing, core values of policing were also postulated which are as follows:

1. Respect for and protection of human rights
2. Transparency and openness in relation to activities and relationships, inside and outside the organization.
3. Demonstrable commitment at all times to deliver the best possible policing service
4. Empowerment of all employees to make appropriate decisions which facilitate the delivery of a quality service
5. Willingness to seek for, listen to, and act upon, public opinion regarding policing priorities

It's a known fact that we live in a global environment where what happens in one part of the world impacts on what happens in another part of the world. There has been a global move in recent times towards democratic and accountable government where in more sensitive policing is an essential component of the government which gives room for informed public to critically assess the performance of the Police in their nations and adjudge the government as good or bad based on the performance of the

police. This perception led to the recent “END SARS” and “End bad government” protests in Nigeria.

However it is pertinent to state that security as sacrosanct as it is should not be let solely in the hands of the government because it is a truism that a society gets whatever kind of Police that the society craves for. The above postulation is hinged on the following indubitable facts such as the Police personnel are products of the same society; the Police also operate within the society and prominently within the available information coupled with the laws applicable in the society and essentially within the facilities bequeathed to the Police. It is in realization of this fact that the recent concept of policing which is community policing bestow powers on members of the Police as well as the citizens. For instance, **SECTION 39 of the Nigeria Police Acts of 2020 and the Administration of Criminal Justice Act (ACJA) of 2015** allows private citizens to make arrests in certain circumstances:

- If a citizen witnesses a crime being committed in their presence
- If a citizen reasonably suspects someone of committing a crime for which the Police can arrest without a warrant

Likewise the same Police approach to prevention and detection of crime as well as protection of lives and properties also requires certain roles from the public to ensure a safer community.

In the consonance with the principles and core values of community policing amongst which are:

1. Intelligence led policing
2. Problem solving approach

3. Active partnership between Police and community
4. Provision of quality service
5. Involvements of the public in deciding policing priorities.

In the light of the above it is germane to state or highlight the roles of the citizens in accordance with the principles and core values of community policing which has become the vogue.

### **ROLES OF CITIZENS IN COMMUNITY POLICING**

1. **Provision of intelligence required for intelligence led policing:** citizens are expected to provide valuable information (intelligence) to empower Police in the prevention and detection of crime as well as protection of lives and property evidently it has been proven that “without enemy within there can’t be enemy without”. Also crimes are committed in the community with or without the presence of the members of the Police who apparently need information. To prevent or detect such crimes such information are expected from citizens who are domiciled within the community where such crimes are committed.
2. **Change of perception towards police:** Intandem with the problem solving approach of modern policing it is expected and essential that the age long perception of the public who are recipient of the services delivered by the Police should change from the hitherto negative perception to positive perception that could engender mutual co-operation and synergy between the Police and the public geared towards

one goal which is providing a safer environment with the public belief that such Police is their own.

- 3. Provision of facilities for effective and quality service delivery:** Without being hypocritical, it is utopic to believe that security can be solely provided by the government or any government agency without active participation of members of the public. Consequently the public are expected to compliment the efforts of the government in the provision of conducive environment which encompass provision of offices or stations, dwelling places for the officers, patrol vehicles for visibility policing etc.

This approach will enhance the performance of quality service delivery and motivate the Police personnel to discharge their duty optimally.

- 4. Mutual co-operation with the Police:** Intandem with one of the core principles of community policing which is partnership between the Police and the community. It is essential for hitch free community policing that there must be mutual understanding of the idiosyncrasy of the member of the Police on one side and the members of the public on the other side which will culminate to symbiotic relationship without which there would be mistrust, and eventual acrimony between the two inseparable components of criminal justice system.
- 5. Establishing mechanism for accountability:** Based on the foregoing, the public is employed to create platform through which actions, inactions and feedbacks regarding the

operations and policing priorities can be mutually discussed such platforms are Police Community Relations Committee (PCRC) Community Policing Development Platform (CPDP) Neighborhood watch etc.

These are roles required as complimentary strategies with collaborative policies and principles of policing that will galvanize the desired protection of life and property in any community where these are present. Moreover, the evolving criminal approaches by criminal elements in our communities or society make it impossible for Police to effectively discharge the onerous task of prevention and detection of crime and protection of life and property which will culminate to safer and habitable environment for the citizenry.

Conclusively, policing has advanced globally from the orthodox approach and perspective which is hitherto regarded as security being business of the government, by the government and for the government rather it's now the norm that security is business of the people, by the people and for the people because the impact of the level of security or insecurity in any society is mostly felt by the people in such society or community therefore the people are expected to be essential components necessary for the security of their community.

Thank you God bless.