

In Search of a Nigeria Police Central Criminal Data and Database and a Nigeria Police Managed Centralised Law Enforcement Data and Database in the 21st Century

How possible is it that in this age the Nigeria Police has no crime database of its own and/or has no crime database it manages on behalf of the law enforcement community in Nigeria? How possible is it that in this age the Nigeria Police has a crime database it uses sparingly and/or only when it feels like rather than as a necessity in its line of duty? How possible is it that in this age the Nigeria Police is not playing its role of coordinating criminal database on behalf of the law enforcement community in Nigeria? This is in spite of the powers confer on the Nigeria Police in Section 4 of Part II - Establishment, Composition and Duties of the Nigeria Police Force - of the Police Act 2020.

All these scenarios are possible because this is Nigeria. This is Nigeria where the Nigerian CHARACTER and the Nigerian FACTOR are at work in their steely determination to make the impossible possible. These questions were the result of insights gleaned from the complaints, lamentations and threats of non-Nigerian victims and countries at the receiving end of the Nigeria government cum Nigeria Police complicity in mismanaging the governance of law enforcement in Nigeria. And this is happening in the 21st century Nigeria and not the 19th century diaper changing colony and protectorates of Nigeria. This is the 21st century Nigeria Police.

These questions and others that would follow are pertinent. They are pertinent because the Nigeria Police is the lead agency in policing and law enforcement in Nigeria on the one hand and on the other hand that answers to these questions in this Nigeria are difficult to obtain essentially because there is no accounting and no accountability.

This is the 21st century. This is the 21st century Fourth Industrial Revolution driven world of ideas, institutions and persons in constant flux. This is the Nigeria Police in the 21st century. This is the Nigeria Police in the 2st century Fourth Industrial Revolution governed by ideas, institutions and persons in state of immobility. Where is the place of the Nigeria Police in this 21st century governance of crimes and criminalities and in leading the management of law enforcement resources generally in Nigeria without data and databases? What makes the 21st century unique and different from other technological ages is its near perfection in the application of technologies in the management of human and material resources.

What are the nature, meaning and purpose of government and governance in Nigeria? Assuming one buys into the associational, descriptive and literary conception of the "national security" and "security" in Section 5 subsections 5 and Section 14 subsections 2B of

the 1999 Constitution, what is the import of this "security", assuming this "security" is a chip off the etymological origins of security as *free from care, something which secure, condition of being secure and feeling no apprehension*, on the lives of Nigerians without the data and databases wherewithal to enforce its realisation? Is the Nigerian government so derelict in its handling of governance to be unaware of the need for crimes and criminalities data and databases in this 21st century? Does the Nigerian government really want to fight crimes and criminalities in Nigeria? Is the government interested in equipping the Nigeria Police to fight crimes and criminalities in Nigeria? Has the political economy of the prevailing "security" blinded, deafened and deadened the government into demonstrating what could arguably be described as existential insensitivity to the provision of so crucial an infrastructure as databases for the Nigeria Police?

Is the leadership of the Nigeria Police interested in fighting crimes and criminalities in Nigeria? How can the government fight crimes and criminalities without a Nigeria Police central criminal data and database? How possible is it for the government to fight crimes and criminalities without the Nigeria Police managed centralised law enforcement data and database? What is the position of the leadership of the Nigeria Police, spanning the last quarter century, in the having and managing a central criminal data and database for the police and a police managed centralised law enforcement data and database? What is the role of the present leadership of the Nigeria Police in ameliorating these inadequacies, if they are inadequacies? Do these leaderships know the value and utility of a Nigeria Police central criminal data and database and a Nigeria Police managed centralised law enforcement data and database? What is the reality of the much-talked about interagency synergy in fighting crimes and criminalities without a Nigeria police managed centralised law enforcement data and database considering the power and mandate of the Nigeria Police to facilitate this as provided in Section 4 (d) of the Police Act?

Are the Nigeria Police and the Nigeria Police leadership aware of the relevant sections of the Administration of Criminal Justice Act 2015 and the Police Act 2020 that confer on the Nigeria Police the power and responsibility to build and managed its central criminal data and database and to coordinate a centralised law enforcement data and database for the management crimes and criminalities in Nigeria? How is the Nigerian government functioning without a Nigeria Police central criminal data and database and a Nigeria Police managed centralised law enforcement data and database?

Whose responsibility is it to provide answers to these questions in the light of what is happening in Nigeria? The Nigerian government leads the way in providing answers to these

questions. The Nigeria Police leadership is joined in providing answers to these questions to the extent that what role has the leadership played and is playing in bring these needs to the attention of the government. This is because as the lead agency with the task of managing crimes and criminalities generally, the Nigeria Police leadership must lead the way, in directing the attention of the government to whatever logistics it requires in the bid to fulfilling its mandates as enshrined in the relevant laws. Has the Nigeria Police leadership done this over the years?? Has the present leadership followed in the effort of its predecessors, if there were efforts by its predecessors, in this direction? If there was none, what has the present leadership accomplished in the direction of drawing the attention of the government on the need for data and databases for the police?

Let me be clear about these questions and their directions. There are two issues contained in the essay. The first is whether there is or there is not a Nigeria Police central crimes data and database. The second question is whether there is or there is not a Nigeria Police managed centralised law enforcement data and database.

The first issue is about the Nigeria Police in its mandate as enshrined in the relevant laws of the country including the 1999 Constitution. The Administration of Criminal Justice Act 2015 and the Police Act 2020 are the legal frameworks that empowered the Nigeria Police to build and administer data and databases. In a workshop on enhancing professionalism and standardisation in criminal investigation recently in Abuja, the Inspector General of Police (IGP) informed participants that in ten months of year 2024 alone, the Nigeria Police secured 35,604 convictions out of 128, 988 criminal cases and, other sundry achievements. Where did the IGP get this statistics in the light of the feeble compliance by police formations all across the country with Section 15 of the Administration of Criminal Justice Act 2015 and Section 44 of the Police Act 2020 respectively let alone keeping records of convictions? How did the IGP arrive at this figure in the absence of data from database to back it up? What is "standardisation" part in the theme of the workshop in the absence of standard data and databases?

Were the provisions of Section 15 of the Administration of Criminal Justice Act of 2015 and/or Section 44 of the Police Act of 2020 the basis of the statistics to which the Inspector General of Police quoted generously amongst other statistics in the workshop? Are the police formations all over the federation implementing the provisions of Sections 15 and 44 and gathering data as stipulated in these Acts? If they are, where are these data banked? Where is the central and/or reserved bank of these data?

The crime and incident database as envisioned in the provisions of the Administration of Criminal Justice Act 2015 and the Police Act 2020 respectively would include biometrics, fingerprint, palm print enrolment, IRIS, E-policing, face recognition, case management, enrollment of finger-print, the status of the cases amongst others. Are the police formations all over the country conducting this exercise, in their day to day interaction, in their line of duty? Does the Nigeria Police have banks for the data? Aside from the banks, should they have them in the zones, does the Nigeria Police have a central or reserved bank for the data?

So, if the Nigeria Police cannot have and manage its own central crimes data and database, how can the Nigeria Police, as the lead law enforcement agency inside Nigeria, as the first port of call for any issue of crime and criminality in Nigeria and beyond, as the agency whose mandate cut across all other specialised policing and law enforcement agencies created out of the Nigeria Police beginning with the Department of State Services to the yet-to-be-empowered Nigeria Peace Corp, manage issues of crimes and criminalities inside Nigeria and outside Nigeria in tandem with the mandates of the Nigeria Police which is similar to mandates of the police in all civilised countries of the world?

The law enforcement agencies' need for a centralised data and database cannot be overstated. The data and database will facilitate crime analysis and information sharing across jurisdictions. In this perspective, the law enforcement community begins with the Nigeria Police to include the Department of State Services, Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corp, National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, Nigeria Customs Service, Nigeria Immigration Service, Nigeria Correctional Service, Nigeria Quarantine Service and the Nigeria military comprising the army, airforce and navy etc. These agencies with the exception of the Nigeria Police handle specialised areas of law enforcement. The Nigeria Police, on the other hand, handles all areas including issues in the specialised areas managed by these agencies. Section 4 (d) of the Police Act empowered the Nigeria Police to conduct itself in this respect.

Therefore, it is the Nigeria Police and not the Department of State Services or any other agencies that has the power to investigate, charge to court and prosecute cases across all spheres including the spheres of these specialised agencies. It is the Nigeria Police that is called upon to provide information on issues of crimes and criminalities that affects individuals and organisations inside Nigeria. It is the Nigeria Police that all policing agencies in the different countries of the world contact through their embassies and through the International policing organisation (Interpol) for information on Nigerians, individuals resident in Nigeria and organisations. These policing agencies do not contact the Department of State Services,

the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies or the Nigeria Army etc. It is therefore the Nigeria Police that should manage a centralised law enforcement data and database should Nigeria have one. Nigeria should have one centralised law enforcement data and database where all these agencies would have their representatives domiciled and feeding and updating the data and database of activities of persons in the care of these agencies. This is because it is to the Nigeria Police that most if not all enquiries whether from within or from outside Nigeria would be directed.

The possession of the centralised law enforcement data and database would equip the Nigeria Police with all the information it requires to be able to fulfill its role of protecting persons and property and the maintenance of law and order as enshrined in Section 4 of the Police Act 2020. This centralised law enforcement data and database, coordinated by the Nigeria Police, should give the Nigeria Police the power to be the one-stop shop and final bus stop in the search for information on persons in Nigeria by interested persons, organisations or governments all over the world. Section 15 and Section 44 of the Police Act and the Administration of Criminal Justice Act empowered the Nigeria Police to build and manage this centralised law enforcement data and database. What have the police leaderships beginning with the Ministry of Police Affairs, the Police Council and the operational leaders at the Louis Edet Headquarters of the Nigeria Police done to actualise this mandate?

In other countries of the world, the police lead the way in having and managing its crime data and database and the centralised law enforcement data and database. This is the case in the United States of America, a country Nigeria copied and continued to copy in every way possible; it is the case in Britain; it is the case in the countries in Europe; it is the case in Egypt; it is the case in Ethiopia; it is the case in Ghana and; it is the case in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Why is Nigeria different? Why is the Nigeria Police unable to have its central criminal data and database? Why is the Nigeria Police unable to have and manage a centralised law enforcement data and database?

Is the police inability solely the fault of the police leadership? Is the Nigeria Police inability the fault of the government through the Ministry of Police Affairs? Are there interagency competition and rivalry working assiduously against the police having and maintaining this asset? What role have agencies such as the Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA), Department of State Services, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, and the Nigeria Army played and are playing in thwarting the effort at building a centralised law enforcement data and database managed by the Nigeria Police particularly in the last quarter century of democracy and the locust invasion called "national security" and "security"?

What is the interest of the Office of the National Security Adviser and indeed these specialised agencies in wanting to usurp the place and role of the Nigeria Police as the first and last agency in policing and law enforcement in Nigeria? What roles have the police leadership played and is playing in undermining the Nigeria Police ability to own and manage their central criminal data and database and in managing a centralised law enforcement data and database? Why is the Nigeria Police, of all the law enforcement agencies which it birthed, so bereft of class that it is its own worse enemy, if it is indeed its own worst enemy?

The Office of the National Security Adviser which began life as the Special Adviser on Security under the Second Republic administration and transformed into the Office of National Security Adviser under the military and which was formerly a sleepy adhoc agency under the military, has since metamorphosed into a growing and expanding bureaucratic behemoth increasingly building up portfolios for itself around "national security" and "security" with the overriding ambition of solely managing what it called "national security" and "security" under civil rule system. The political class has played along in saddling the Office with the role of managing this "national security" and "security" since the beginning of the Fourth Republic and actively so since the beginning of the first transition of political power in 2007.

So, where does the Office of the National Security Adviser, in coordinating the management of "national security" and "security", empty its cases, in all of its categories - be it open, closed, transferred, under investigation, awaiting trial etc. since the beginning of the insurgencies called insecurity in Nigeria? Where does the Department of State Services empty its cases? Where does the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission empty its cases? Where does the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency empty its cases? Where do the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corp empty its cases? Where does the Nigeria Army empty its cases?

With the highest sense of responsibility, who is and should be responsible for the management of the data and database from these agencies as the first and last port of call for persons, organisations and countries in need of data on crimes and criminalities in Nigeria? Section 4 (d) of the Police Act 2020 which says the Nigeria Police shall "enforce all laws and regulations without any prejudice to the enabling Acts of other security agencies" not only support the Nigeria Police in this role. The provisions of the Section 15 and Section 44 of the Administration of Criminal Justice Act 2015 and the Police Act 2020 cleared the road for the Nigeria Police to play this role.

Where is the centralised law enforcement data and database to which these cases, from these agencies, in whatever status, are emptied? Does Nigeria have one such centralised law enforcement data and database? If Nigeria has, where is it? Is it functioning? Are the other agencies of law enforcement part of the building and updating of the data and database in the

spirit of the much-hyped interagency synergy and cooperation? Who manages the data and database? If Nigeria has not such data and database, why should Nigeria not have one? In the last fifteen years of actively fighting different types of criminalities, where are the data and the database of these efforts?

Or are these agencies beginning with the Nigeria Army and the Office of the National Security Adviser clogs in the efforts towards having a centralised data and database and the undisputed place and role of the Nigeria Police in managing this data and database? Is the ONSA part of the ploy to keeping the Nigeria Police from having and managing the data and database? Is the ONSA, like the military particularly the army, neck deep in finding justifications for its existence and role, in the scheme of what they called "national security" and "security", that they feel they should continue to shrink the responsibility and power of the Nigeria Police amidst the existential crisis confronting the Nigeria Police and the Nigeria Police leadership under the democracy of the last 25 years?

Are there ploys by other agencies of having their own data and database independent of a centralised law enforcement data and database that should be managed by the Nigeria Police as the statutory authority on crimes in Nigeria? Are there ploys by other agencies to usurp the management role of the Nigeria Police over any centralised law enforcement data and database should this exist and/or come online eventually? Or is the Nigeria Police leadership complicit in undermining the police's lead role in having the data and database and in managing the data and database? What role has the Nigeria Police leadership played and is playing in the search for a central police data and database and a centralised Nigeria Police managed law enforcement data and database in order to ease its work of policing Nigeria and governing the policing of Nigeria?

No agency amongst the law enforcement agencies in Nigeria undermines itself like the Nigeria Police - the mother agency - that birthed most if not all the law enforcement agencies in Nigeria. This attitude is leadership imbued and this tells on every aspect of the Nigeria Police. The attitude to undermine itself is a function of the place and role the Nigeria Police played in the course of prolonged military rule and the consequent psycho-social and socio-political stigmatisation the Nigeria Police endured during the period. This is a condition worsened in the last 25 years by the disposition of the political class to making the Nigeria Police the weeping child, in the scheme of law enforcement vis-à-vis the military particularly the army, which the political class feared and appeased as its competitor, in the political leadership of the country. The Nigeria Police leadership failed to recover from its psycho-social inferiority vis-à-vis other law enforcement agencies and, as a result continues to falter and fail in leading the police over the causes and courses of the last quarter century of the democratisation of ideas, institutions and persons. The Nigeria Police and the Nigeria

Police leadership lack of class ensure that they consigned the Nigeria Police into the second and third fiddle role in an all-encompassing role designed by Nigeria's laws that put the Nigeria Police in the front.

I argued that the insight to these questions were the result of the complaints, lamentations and resignations of organisations and countries over the governance of policing and law enforcement in Nigeria. This was consequent on the negative effects these organisations and countries have had because of the insensitivity of the Nigerian government and the Nigeria Police. What is the present leadership of the Nigeria Police doing to address the lacuna of central criminal data and database and a police managed centralised law enforcement criminal data and database? This is in the light of the embarrassments Nigeria and Nigerians suffered and continues to suffer in the hands of international organisations and governments over the export of criminals into their outfits and countries because of the absence of central Nigeria Police data and database and a Nigeria Police managed centralised law enforcement data and database to monitor persons with criminal records.

Imagine the Nigerian government and the Nigeria Police lampooned and made the butt of joke by a Non-Nigeria source that in the 21st century Nigeria was still grappling with issues of non-availability of crime data and database that enabled thorough checks on criminal records of persons. Not only was this an insult on the government and the police, it was an indictment of Nigeria's governance record in its entirety. Arguably, if the Nigeria Police had one such data and database, whose entries were accurate and had use its content conscientiously in supplying the needed records on persons and organisations having transactions with countries other than Nigeria, the Non-Nigerian source behind this statement would not have made these disparaging remarks.

The evidence came to light in the review of visa applications documents submitted to embassies in Nigeria by Nigerians. The accusation by the Non-Nigerian source was much more damning when viewed from the detailed it provided in order to validate its claims. The documents tendered for visa applications were fake and unconformable. This phase of the indictment was specifically directed at the Nigeria Police primarily from the point of view of its lead role in managing crimes and criminalities and in being the first stop for data on persons and organisations in Nigeria. There was no mention of the Office of the National Security Adviser, the Nigeria Army, the Department of State Services, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission etc. The Nigeria Police was mentioned in a bold black and white marking as the culprit for this malfeasance.

However, this was not just the case of the Nigeria Police alone. Indirectly and in what was a sweeping indictment on all the agencies of law enforcement in Nigeria, the Non-Nigerian source while drawing on Nigeria's battles with insecurity could not believe that there was no modicum of data coordination amongst the law enforcement agencies in the country. Nigeria has been battling what it called insecurity for almost two decades now and the ONSA has so-called coordinated this effort. In terms of the logistics to facilitate this fight particularly if this fight was serious, there should have been the abundance of the infrastructures at the disposal of the government and the line agencies to aid the fight. This infrastructure would, above all else, include data and databases of the specific and general types and a credible coordination of data from these databases amongst the agencies involved. This is not the case.

The hard knock on the heads of Nigeria's government and the Nigeria Police over the issue of data and databases by the Non-Nigerian source attempted to raise and answer some of the questions in the foregoing including the availability or not of data and databases in Nigeria. The non-Nigeria source wondered whether the inability of the Nigeria Police to provide accurate data on persons seeking visas to embassies requesting information on these persons was because they lacked this data or the lack of the use of the available crime data and database especially of the type designed for criminal records of individuals or organisations. It was an admission that there was some data and database of some type which was not used and/or not used properly in supplying the right information to the organisations that required this. The implication of this was the accusation of corruption or the abuse of entrusted power for private gains by persons within the Nigeria Police saddled with administering whatever type of data was available.

This is worrisome to say the least. In the first place, it is that the Nigeria Police does not have a centralised data and database. If this is true, it is a putrid stinking shame on the Nigeria Police. In the second place, it is that the Nigeria Police have a centralised data and database which it is not using or using properly. If this is the case, it is not beyond the Nigerian Character and Factor of the time we live in. Which of the two statements explained the condition contained in the allegations by the Non-Nigerian source against Nigeria and the Nigeria Police?

The Non-Nigerian's concern over the issue of data and databases and their use which it described as a "practice" by the Nigeria Police, the custodian of crime data in Nigeria, was borne out of the consequences which it argued was "dare" since it led to the influx of miscreants into western countries as a result of the visas issued.

Nigerians seeking visas to travel abroad are in for embarrassment as embassies will double their efforts at bureaucratising the process of getting visas which is a clever way of rejecting their applications for visas. The Non-Nigerian source revealed that this rejection will intensify until the database from which documents issued by the Nigeria Police on them are made available to these embassies. These countries warned that they will not continue to accept documents that only enabled terrorists and criminals to access their visas for trips to their countries.

So, where is the Nigerian government on the question of data and databases for the Nigeria Police and law enforcement community managed by the Nigeria Police? Where is the Nigeria Police in the ownership and use of its own central data and database for crimes in Nigeria? Where is the Nigeria Police in leading the charge in the creation and management of a centralised law enforcement data and database? This is in view of the Nigeria Police role as the one-stop shop for information on persons and organisations in Nigeria by all and sundries.

For how long would Nigerians continue to suffer humiliation in the hands of foreigners because of the actions and/or inactions of their government and its agencies? For how long would the Nigeria Police continue to use methods of 19th century policing in the 21st century? Who is responsible for this state of affairs? What is the authenticity of the IGP's statistics of criminal conviction vis-a-vis the condition of data and databases revealed by this non-Nigerian source?

In the case of the data and databases and arising from the comments of the Non-Nigerian source, shouldn't the Inspector General of Police do some explaining on the issues as presented here?

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