

Appraisal of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Tools for Curbing Internal Security Challenges in Nigeria

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Abstract

Nigeria has experienced a considerable increase in insecurity in recent years, compromising its socioeconomic stability. Terrorism, kidnapping, armed robbery, and secessionist movements are among the many security concerns that the country faces. These threats contribute to high rates of poverty, unemployment, and decreased industrial production. Information and communication technology (ICT) offers viable answers for addressing these issues by improving intelligence gathering, surveillance, and communication among security organizations. Drones, CCTV cameras, biometric identification, and data analytics, for example, can all help to improve security operations. This article assesses the role of ICT technologies in tackling internal security concerns in Nigeria, including their benefits, limitations, and potential for further adoption. The report also examines Nigeria's present degree of insecurity and cites barriers to the successful integration of ICT into national security initiatives, such as a lack of ICT skills among security personnel, insufficient government commitment, and inadequate infrastructure. While ICT alone cannot address Nigeria's security concerns, effective deployment has the ability to considerably boost national security measures. Addressing these difficulties is crucial to ensure that ICT is fully exploited in combating the country's growing insecurity.

Keywords: Insecurity, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Nigeria, National Security, Surveillance

Introduction

In recent times Nigeria has witnessed an unprecedented escalation in insecurity. making national security a major issue and prompting huge budgetary allocation to the security sector (Nigeria-South Africa Chamber of Commerce, 2016). The current state of insecurity in Nigeria today can be attributed to several factors that have been inadequately addressed for a long time by both the Government and the populace. This has led to situations where the country's unity and instability are under threat necessitating swift, adequate and a new approach to tackle the ongoing security challenges plaguing the nation (Kemi, 2016)



In the last two decades, numerous militant groups have emerged and challenged in the most violent form the authority of the Nigerian government. This has resulted in a surge in urban crimes including armed robbery, kidnappings, ritual killings, and cultism (Kemi, 2016). The high level of insecurity poses significant threat to Nigeria's socio-economic development, contributing to rural and urban poverty, high rate of unemployment, low industrial output, unstable and deteriorating exchange rate, high inflation rate, inadequate physical and social infrastructure, very large domestic debt, and rising stock of external debt (Olabanji & Ese, 2014).

Information technology (IT) or information and communication technology (ICT) presents a powerful tool for monitoring illegal activities and could play an important role in enhancing Nigeria's national security against any emerging threats (Peter & Babatunde, 2012). For instance, in 2011, satellite surveillance was instrumental in tracking and apprehending Osama Bin Laden in Pakistan. Similarly, in Nigeria ICT technologies were recently employed to detect a suspect of the Offa bank heist on April 5, 2018 in Kwara State.

ICT when properly deployed and adopted can provide significant solutions to the persistent security challenges of kidnapping, militancy, armed robbery, suicide bombing, pervasive corruptions and destruction of properties (Mukhtar, Salim, Abdulllahi, Ahmad, & Aisha, 2016). While ICT alone cannot completely guarantee national security, its strategic utilization can significantly bolster the efforts of the security agencies in combating the threats (Yakubu, Mohd, & Abdulkadir, 2018) .. The rapid growth of ICT globally provides an opportunity for Nigeria to use these tools to improve internal security. ICT solutions can help security organizations communicate in real time, acquire intelligence, and coordinate more effectively, boosting response times and operational efficiency. This report critically evaluates the role of ICT technologies in addressing internal security concerns in Nigeria, noting their merits, limits, and potential for future use.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are:

- i. To ascertain the level of insecurity in Nigeria
- ii. To identify the role of ICT tools in curbing national internal security challenges in Nigeria
- iii. To identify the likely challenges to the deployment of ICT for national security in Nigeria



Conceptual Clarification

Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) refers to a broad range of technologies used for recording, broadcasting and communicating information. These includes mediums for recording information such as Magnetic disk, tape, optical disks (CD/DVD) flash and paper record, technology for the broadcasting, information, radio, television and technologies for communicating through voice and sound or image microphone camera, loudspeaker, telephone to cellular phones (Akor, Justina, & Solomon, 2019). Essentially, it encompasses the technological devise used to collect, communicate, disseminate, store and manage information. This includes, radio, television, mobile phones, hardware & software, computer network and satellite system (Yakubu, Mohd, & Abdulkadir, 2018).

National Security

National Security refers to the resistance to, or protection from harm to any vulnerable and valuable assert of a nation such as persons, personal properties, dwelling places, organizations, and communities. It is the protection or the safety of a country's secrets and its citizens (Duke, 2014).

National Security rest on two pillars. The first pillar is the maintenance and protection of the socio-economic order in the face of internal and external threats. The second pillar involves the protection of a preferred international order which minimize the threat to core values and interest as well as the domestic order (Pullah & Good, 2020). National security is a concept where the government, along with its legislative bodies, is responsible for protecting the state and its citizens against all kind of crises within the country through a variety of power projections, including political power, diplomacy, economic power and military strength (Kemi, 2016). The central pillar of Nigeria national security policy is the preservation of the safety of Nigerians both at home and abroad, as well as promotion of the sovereignty, integrity and assets of the country (Full Report of the Special Summit on National Security, 2021)

Security: This is defined as the degree of resistance to, or protection from harm to any vulnerable and valuable assert such as a person, dwelling places, organizations, communities, or





nations (Duke, 2014). **Insecurity**: On the other hand, insecurity is the state of being subject to danger or injury or the anxiety that is experienced when one feels vulnerable and insecure (Udoh, 2015).

Nigeria's Level of Insecurity and Threats to Internal Security

Threats to Nigeria's national security is real, with Nigeria been declared a failing state by the international community in several circles and in policy papers. In 2012, for instance the country was ranked as one of the top 10 failed states in Africa by the Fund for Peace (FFP) in its report due to the growing wave of insecurity and violence (Gubak & Bulus, 2018). Despite government efforts to address the threats to national security and combat the increasing wave of crime, by making huge budgetary allocations to security and the national assembly passing the anti-terrorism act in 2011, the level of insecurity still remains high as the country is ranked low in the global peace index (Gubak & Bulus, 2018).

In the first half of 2021 as stated in a report by SBM intelleigence over 2371 people were kidnapped across the country during the first half on 2021, with an average of 13 persons abducted daily (Johnbosco & Abraham, 2021). In 2020, there were 2 404 security incidents recorded in Nigeria which result to 7699 fatalities. Most security incidents were recorded in Borno state 582 with Gombe state having the list number of incidences as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Number of incidents and fatalities coded battles, explosions/remote violence, riots, and violence against civilians in 2020

Type of incidents	Number of incidents	idents Number of fatalities 3 336	
Battles	844		
Explosions/Remote violence	220	1 900	
Riots	297	204 2 259	
Violence against civilians	1 043		
Total	2 404	7 699	

Source: European Asylum Support Office, 2021

Also, between January and April of 2021 a total of 997 security incidents took place (378 battles, 102 explosions/remote violence, 423 incidents of violence against civilians, and 94 riots), resulting in 3 490 fatalities with Borno state still having the highest number of incidences as shown in Table 2 (European Asylum Support Office, 2021).



Table 2: Number of incidents and fatalities coded battles, explosions/remote violence, riots, and violence against civilians

Type of incidents Jan-April 2021	Number of incidents	Number of fatalities 2082	
Battles	378		
Explosions/Remote violence	102	396	
Riots	94	84	
Violence against civilians	423	928	
Total	997	3 490	

Source: European Asylum Support Office, 2021

Several factors have contributed to the rising insecurity in Nigeria and the government efforts have not yielded any positive result in tackling insecurity (Gubak & Bulus, 2018). Since 1999 the nature of threats/ forms of threats to Nigeria's internal national security have continued to diversify, with the advent of the Biafra and the Oduduwa republic secessionist groups, killer herdsmen and high rate of kidnapping. Table 3 below shows the nature/forms of threat to Nigeria' national security.

Table 3: Nature/forms of Nigeria's national security threats and zones

S/N	Security Threats	Year	Political Zone
1	Militancy Niger -Delta	1999-2007	South- South
2	Ethno/Religious Crisis	1999-Date	North- Central
3	Kidnapping, Ritual Killing and Armed Robbery.	2007- Date	South East and South West
4	Boko Haram/ISWAP Insurgency	2009-Date	North East, N/Central & North West
5	Secessionist Groups	2016-Date	South east and South west
6	Banditry/Herdsmen	2009-Date	Entire north
7	Security sector violence against civilians	2020-Date	Across states in the country

Of all the threats the Islamic sect, Boko Haram, whose operations have assumed higher and more complex dimensions pose the biggest challenge to national security in Nigeria and



according to the Global Terrorism Index, Boko Haram ranked as the second deadliest terrorist group in 2019 making Nigeria the third most impacted nation by terrorism (Full Report of the Special Summit on National Security, 2021). Insurgency has adversely affected some 15 million people, displaced over two million people and caused an estimated 20 000 to 30 000 deaths.

These threats are spread across the entire country, threatening to tear the country apart and the president declaring that the country is facing a state of emergency. Understanding the socio- geographic contours of the threats is essential in adapting custumized solution in fighting these them (Mark, 2021). Figure 1 shows the map of Nigeria and the spread of the security threats in each region and their forms.

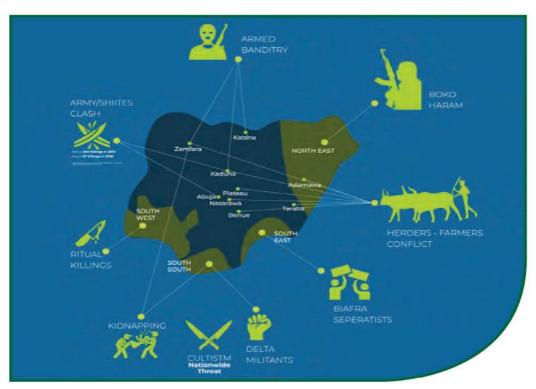
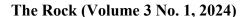


Figure 1: Map of Nigeria showing security threats by region (Source: African center for strategic studies)

Terrorism, the wanton criminal acts of kidnapping, hostage taking, bomb blast secessionist agitation and various crises in different locations in the country, have made it clear to the





government that there is insecurity which can lead to anarchy if not addressed and arrested (Peter & Babatunde, 2012).

The Role of ICT Tools in Curbing Internal Security Challenges in Nigeria

ICT has not only brought about the use of modern technology in combating criminalities beyond information dissemination, but rather widening its scope to involve detection, analyzing and identification of citizens' activities, interaction and movement with aid of different ICT facilities. The recent introduction of ICT related gadgets in carrying out national duties such as automated finger print information system for (JAMB, driver's license and international passport and SIM registration), has shown the country's readiness in tackling insurgency with ICT (Yakubu, Mohd, & Abdulkadir, 2018). ICT will help enable the nation to identify potential threats, share information more readily and aid development of new security models (Kemi, 2016). ICT tools can play the following role in curbing insecurity.

Intelligence Gathering and Surveillance: ICT tools such as drones, CCTV cameras, and biometric systems have revolutionized intelligence gathering and surveillance. These tools enable security agencies to monitor high-risk areas, gather actionable intelligence, and track the movements of suspected criminals.

Installation of Close Circuit Television (CCTV) Nation Wide: Close Circuit Television (CCTV) CCTV plays a significant role in protecting the public and assisting the security in the investigation of crime and are widely used in developed country such United Kingdom and United States and underdeveloped nations like Nigeria to detect criminal and terrorist activities (Abdulkadir, Hassan, & Abdulrahman:, 2016). CCTV systems have the ability to take high resolution images with date-and-time-specific playback capability for live monitoring purposes giving positive results various parts of the world and it's for surveillance has become a common occurrence to deter future terrorist attacks (Yakubu, Mohd, & Abdulkadir, 2018). A surveyed of some areas in the United Kingdom (UK) and cities in United States (U.S) revealed a 51% decrease in crime, public transportation areas saw a 23% decrease in crimes, systems in public settings decreased by 7% in crimes, with the surveillance been more effective in parking lots (Abdulkadir, Hassan, & Abdulrahman:, 2016). The Nigeria Federal Government installed about



700 CCTV in Lagos State and a few were installed in some other states. This selective installation may not stem this high national crime wave, but the focus should be on a nation-wide installation of these CCTV to ensure adequate surveillance in the country. Findings of a research conducted 2020 on a review of CCTV cameras in Abuja reveal significant relationship between closed circuit television cameras and theory of deterrence, criminal justice, fear of crime, legality, policy formation and regulation of closed-circuit television (Ngboawaji, Graham, & Michael, 2020). With the rise in crime in Nigeria where terrorism and kidnapping are issues disturbing the peace of the country, there is need for CCTV to be deployed nationwide as their deployment has proven effective in deterring crime and aiding investigations (Abdulkadir, Hassan, & Abdulrahman:, 2016)

Utilization of Drones for Aerial Surveillance: Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) or drones can be used to conduct aerial surveillance in remote and inaccessible locations. They provide real-time data and images that can be used to make tactical decisions. Drones can travel faster than vehicles on the ground and have loitering capabilities, making them extremely valuable for aerial observation. UAVs are programmed offline and commanded in real time to navigate extremely poor weather while collecting surveillance and intelligence data for security objectives (Temitope, 2020).

Drones have been used to police borders and dissuade illegal border crossings by criminals and terrorists in countries such as the United Kingdom, Germany, and the United States of America. In Nigeria, they have been utilized against Boko Haram terrorists to follow their movements and to target fighters by the Nigerian military (Kerry, 2021). They typically carry infrared cameras, heat sensors, GPS, motion detection sensors, and automated license plate readers. Additionally, drones can provide imagery that the human eye cannot detect, making drones a viable surveillance tool (Oluchukwu, 2023). The use of this crucial technology would improve the operation of Nigeria's security forces and internal security.

Explosive Device Detectors: Nowadays a lot of attention is being paid to the development of methods and instrumentation for the detection of explosive devices. Initiated explosives devices have already killed thousands of people and injured several tens of thousands worldwide not



only Nigeria and destroyed Infrastructural facilities, like railway stations, airports, undergrounded railways, security offices, electricity, water supply (Abdulkadir, Hassan, & Abdulrahman:, 2016). Markets, worship centers and schools are preferred targets for explosive device attacks by terrorist groups, but Nigeria are currently using handheld detecting machine for detection (Yakubu, Mohd, & Abdulkadir, 2018). New forms of bomb attacks are more sophisticated, more dangerous, using remote control of Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) or denoted using mobile phones which permits terrorists to initiate a bomb immediately (Yakubu, Mohd, & Abdulkadir, 2018). There is need therefore, to provide improved detecting devices which can be placed in door as in banks and gates within public premises and other sensitive and security cautious centers. Detection systems with a reliable detection efficiency used in broad range of IEDs can be deployed to prevent bomb attacks.

Biometric Systems: Biometric identification systems, including fingerprint and facial recognition, enhance the accuracy of identifying suspects and tracking criminal activities. In recent years the Nigerian government have introduce programs such as the Creation and use of National Identity Database Management System, Sim card registration, GPS driver's license with the aim of creating a data base of its citizens. This data base will contain biometric information of all residents within the country for easy tracking and identification.

The National Identity Management Commission (MIMC) was set up with three fundamental mandates amongst which is to establish, operate and manage the National Identity Management System (NIMS). The National Identity Database System when created will act and be used as pool of data from where several agencies can access data for their own purposes. NIMS offers benefit to foster security by making it harder for criminals to use false or multiple identities. It will also help government, through the enhanced performance of the Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs), to protect us all from crime, especially terrorism (The Head of service, 2014). The Nigerian national security summit in its short time recommendation, recommended mandatory registration of tenants (know your tenant) by landlords and mandatory registration of domestic employees (know your employee) on the resident database. All operators of commercial transportation services and members of transport unions should also be mandatorily registered on the database. This database should be linked to existing identification



platforms like NIN, Drivers' license, National Passport and BVN (Full Report of the Special Summit on National Security, 2021)

On march 28th 2011 the Nigerian Communication Commission (NCC) embarked on a nationwide SIM Card Registration project. The Commission was approached by the security agencies to assist them in resolving crime perpetrated through the use of mobile phones in which criminal elements could not be identified with the phone number they use (Edsbäcker, 2010). The objectives of SIM Registration exercise are:

- i. To assist security agencies in resolving crime and by extension to enhance the security of the state.
- ii. To facilitate the collation of data by the Commission about phone usage in Nigeria
- iii. To enable operators to have a predictable profile about the users on their networks
- iv. To enable the Commission to effectively implement other value-added services like Number Portability among others.

A GPS driver's license can be used to track the location and position of the driver in real time. Global Positioning System (GPS) is increasingly being adopted by private and public enterprise to track and monitor humans for location-based services (LBS). LBS can be used in a variety of contexts, such as security, health, indoor object search, entertainment, work, personal life, etc. LBS include services to identify a location of a person or object, such as discovering the nearest banking cash machine or the whereabouts of a friend or employee. LBS include parcel tracking and vehicle tracking services. Most developed countries have focused on the GPS technologies in resolving some of their inherent security problems (Yusuf, 2005).

Communication and Coordination

Effective communication and collaboration are crucial for dealing with security concerns. ICT tools enable easy communication among various security authorities and divisions.

Advanced radio communication technologies: Advanced radio communication technologies provide secure and reliable communication among security personnel, particularly in the field of operation. Various radio communication technologies, such as Digital Mobile Radios (DMR), TETRA (Terrestrial Trunked Radio) Systems, P25 (Project 25) Radios, Satellite Radios, and



Body-Worn Radios, have been used by security personnel over the years to aid in the mitigation of insecurity. These technologies enable effective and secure communication, text messaging, and data transmission over secure channels, group calls, secure channels to protect sensitive information, and interoperability across different agencies, making them secure and reliable communication tools for various security operations (Julian & Hervé, 2022).

Mobile Applications: Mobile applications have become indispensable in modern security operations and law enforcement, enabling a wide range of functions that improve operational efficiency and effectiveness. Real-time communication mobile apps, such as Slack or Microsoft Teams, allow for continuous communication, easing coordination and information sharing between security personnel in the field and command centers. Field reporting apps such as eFORCE and eCitation Solutions allow personnel to submit incident reports and citations to the appropriate authorities straight from the field. Data access and retrieval apps, such as COPLINK Mobile and NCIC Mobile, improve operating decision-making and response times by enabling rapid access to essential databases. GPS and tracking apps, surveillance, and monitoring applications as well as public engagement and reporting, and other mobile application applications are also used by developed countries to address insecurity issues.

On August 14, 2024, the federal government announced that, as part of its efforts to improve national security, it has developed a mobile application called "Mobilizer" that Nigerian youths and the majority of the grassroots populace can download on their phones to report crimes and criminalities in real time. Regardless of their location. This program would assist security agencies comprising the Nigerian Police, the military, and other security agencies to timely swing into action to monitor, apprehend, and bring criminals to justice (Kingsley, 2024).

Command and control centers: Command and control centers that use ICT combine many communication channels, enabling for real-time monitoring and coordination of security actions. This integration allows for smooth communication among numerous agencies, officers, and command units, which improves response times and decision-making in urgent situations. These centers improve situational awareness and operational efficiency by integrating



instruments like as GPS tracking, data retrieval systems, and surveillance technology. The use of ICT in command-and-control centers has transformed security operations, resulting in improved collaboration and incident management (Toju, Henry, & Christain, 2014).

Data Analysis and Predictive Policing: Data analytics techniques are increasingly being utilized to examine criminal patterns and anticipate future security issues. These tools help security services deploy resources more effectively and detect crimes before they happen. Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and crime mapping tools assist in identifying crime hotspots and forecasting future crime locations. GIS helps security operatives determine potential crime sites by examining complex seemingly unrelated criteria and displaying them all in a graphical, layered, spatial interface or map (Toju, Henry, & Christain, 2014).

Challenges of Deploying ICT in Fighting Insecurity in Nigeria

The use of Information and Communication Technology tools in combating insecurity is not without a challenge. This challenge is:

Low Level of ICT Skills Among Security Personnel: Low level of ICT skills among security personnel is one of the major challenges of the use ICT to combat crime in Nigeria. Nigeria is ranked 122th out of 155 by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Development Index for ICT use with a low growth rate of 0.18% (Duke, 2014). Out of 255 personnel of the Nigeria Army Signal Corps a study shows that only 89 personnel could use ICT tool. This result is a reflection of what happens in other security agencies. ICT tools are becoming cheaper and more readily available therefore, their availability should translate into effective and effectual use of the tool to tackle insecurity and other problems of life (Duke, 2014).

Lack of Government Commitment: Nigeria expenditure on military hardware for the purpose of combating insurgency is on the increase as are result of the method government is using in fighting by depending more on her military effort other than the use of ICT. As government is combating the rising insecurity in the country occasioned by insurgencies erupting from different segments of the society through its military, there has been embarrassing quietness from the ICT sector (Duke, 2014). The in ability of the ICT sector in using ICT resource to combat insurgency is coupled with the lack of Nigerian government commitment in deploying



ICT resources to this end, because of its inability technical and legal infrastructure in place (Duke, 2014).

Poor and erratic power supply: The epileptic and erratic nature of the power supply has been a great and concurrent problem affecting the ICT usage for security.

Inadequacy of competent manpower: There is no enough competent manpower in the country handle ICT. Also, some drift out of the country in search of greener pasture overseas negatively affecting ICT usage and operations in the country.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the government's traditional ways of dealing with security challenges have proven ineffective in combating a wide range of threats, including terrorism, kidnapping, and armed robbery. This prolonged insecurity poses substantial hurdles to Nigeria's socioeconomic progress and undermines national unity. Information and communication technology (ICT) has emerged as a critical tool for strengthening national security. ICT can help security personnel detect, prevent, and respond to criminal activity more efficiently by gathering intelligence, conducting surveillance, using biometric systems, and analyzing data.

However, deploying ICT for security objectives is not without challenges. Issues such as insufficient ICT skills among security personnel, a lack of government commitment, poor infrastructure, and inconsistent power supply impede the effective deployment of these technologies. Addressing these difficulties will necessitate a coordinated effort by the government to invest in ICT infrastructure, improve the technical capabilities of security personnel, and build comprehensive programs that incorporate technology into national security frameworks.

By embracing ICT's potential, Nigeria may strengthen its efforts to combat insecurity and provide a safer environment for its population. The incorporation of modern technology into security operations has the potential to drastically reduce the nation's existing threats while also paving the path for a more secure and prosperous future.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the foregoing discussion:

- i. Government should make available ICT gadgets and ensure proper operation and utilization of these tools in all its agencies, department and parastatals more especially in the security sector, campuses, custom service commission, immigration services and others.
- ii. Government should train its personnel on ICT knowledge in all sectors and agencies.
- iii. Widespread deployment and utilization of modern surveillance equipment such as drones, CCTVs, aircrafts, telegraphic and electronic monitors to the localities and communities.
- iv. The Nigerian ICT controlling bodies (NCC and NITDA) should ensure proper implementation of ICT policy for development and security consciousness.
- v. The IT organizations, NCC, NITDA and the government should collaborate to ensure confidential data collection about ICT facilities and who is using it, to enable operators to have predictable profile about users on their networks.

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