

## THE TASKS AHEAD FOR THE NEW IGP

**O**n January 29th 2019, a new Inspector-General of Police was appointed to take over the reins of Nigeria's frontline law enforcement agency, the Nigeria Police. As he settled into his new office, IGP Mohammed Adamu declared that he will "adopt a fresh strategy to tackle the insecurity challenges facing Nigeria."

The Nigeria Police is the country's frontline law enforcement agency. Its constitutional role includes crime prevention, maintenance of law and order and security lives and property. There is however no gain saying that the police has fractious relations with the citizenry. Its core constituents whose lives and property, it is mandated to secure, do not trust it. Indeed, the mantra: "The Police is your Friend" has become a source of ridicule, because the public's perception of the police is that of disappointment.

Hence, it is imperative for IGP Adamu to set about restoring public trust and confidence in the Police without any delay; repair police/community relations and demonstrate through reform that the police in the conduct of law enforcement and crime prevention can be a

friend. It is also imperative for him to project the Nigeria police as a trustworthy institution. This will be a catalyst for public cooperation and support.

A recent pop vox conducted by Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre (PLAC) revealed a bundle of wrong-doings against the police ranging from allegations of torture, extra-judicial killings, poor response to crime, indiscriminate arrests and false detention, to extortion, sloppy investigations, fake uniforms, poor performance etc. Over the years, media reports have highlighted dissatisfaction of the general public with this brand of policing.

These complaints have served up negative publicity for Nigeria's police, and while the list may seem endless, it is not unconquerable. However, resolving these problems requires focus and single-mindedness. Therefore, the new IGP must listen to the voice of the citizens and act decisively to address these anomalies in Nigeria's policing culture.

Widespread calls for a human rights-based approach to law enforcement and fighting crime have been making the rounds

for a while. It is a model that preaches that the police have a duty to uphold human rights during their policing activities. It speaks to the professionalism and competence of the police through the introduction of training and re-training programmes that lay emphasis on acquisition of policing skillsets compliant with human rights. It makes for better policing and breeds support and cooperation from the community. IGP Adamu should work towards institutionalising this model in the Nigeria Police, because it is undoubtedly a veritable channel to rebuild integrity, public trust and satisfaction.

While demanding high standards of policemen and women, the nation should be prepared to invest in those who have the mandate to keep it safe and secure. Indeed the issue of investment in the police, has been a nagging headache for many years, the lack of which is said to be part of the root causes for the low morale, despair and indiscipline, as well as low performance. Take for example, the issues of operational funding, training, re-training and equipment have been raised severally over the years. So too have matters of

welfare, salary, promotion and reward systems. The latter is a particular recurring point and linked to the infamous extortion practices regularly witnessed across the country. Much has been said about police salaries, working conditions and its impact on their service to society. Last November saw a remedy as a new rank salary structure adjustment by which salary, allowances and pension for officers and men was approved by the National Salaries, Incomes and Wages Commission. It is expected that the new IGP will ensure this upward review is speedily implemented.

The dilapidated state of the police barracks across the country has also been the subject of many media reports. In September 2011, an oversight advocacy group, The Nigeria Police Watch, published a report titled: "Nigerian police barracks in terrible state of disrepair." The article accompanied with several photographs described police barracks as: "Dilapidated buildings, stinking gutters, broken staircases and railings, torn roofs, heaps of waste and many other unpleasant sights in what clearly depicts neglect."

In 2016, one of the decrepit residential buildings in Lagos Police Barracks in Ikeja collapsed killing two men. Living accommodation impacts on performance and if the police wants to live up to its obligations to Nigerians, diligent attention must be paid to this pressing problem.

Truthfully, much of public expectation of changes in the police also lies in legislative reforms, to raise standards of public security services, expand transparency and accountability in policing, and improve professional standards. The Police (Repeal and Re-Enactment) Bill 2018, which was introduced in the Senate by Senator Ibn Na' Allah, seeks to achieve this.

The rationale for the Bill includes "Inefficiency and ineffectiveness; non-adherence to human rights standards, prevalence of arbitrary arrest, detention, torture and denial of medical assistance, lack of civility, and nonchalance." Key features of the Bill include "A police that is responsive to the security concerns of the citizens, ensuring the safety and security of all persons, fostering

cooperation and partnership with communities."

The Bill also takes cognizance of the importance of a reward system, thus it recommends a Police Reward Fund and the Recognition and Commendation for gallantry and exemplary service. It demonstrates the partnership between Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and lawmakers to address deficiencies in the police as an institution and its operations, and also seeks to address insecurity and crime.

Hence, while CSOs have been advocates, as well as a channel for public oversight and accountability from Nigeria's frontline agency in internal security, the police leadership under IGP Adamu, must also remain open to the legitimate concerns of its prime constituents and act accordingly.

As a law enforcement agency, it must work hard to regain public respect; improve public perception about its image; and imbibe new approaches to its policing strategies to ensure it delivers security services in accordance with best practices.

## **NIGERIA CIVIL SOCIETY SITUATION ROOM**

Secretariat: c/o Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre (PLAC),

Plot 451 Gambo Jimeta Crescent, off Nasir El-Rufai Crescent, via Gilmor Junction,  
Guzape District, Abuja, Nigeria.

Tel: 09032999919, 09095050505; Email: [situationroom@placng.org](mailto:situationroom@placng.org)

Website: <http://situationroom.placng.org>