



NAOSRE SEARCH LIGHT ON STATE'S SECURITY

HEIGHTENED INSECURITY IN OYO STATE AND THE N34B SECURITY VOTE QUESTION

Like many other States in Nigeria, tales of insecurity have trailed the administration of Oyo State governor, Engineer Seyi Makinde, a corporate Czar, who made laudable marks in the oil and gas sector before venturing into politics.

Pre 2019, governor Makinde had solicited for votes, promising the people of Oyo State through a concise manifesto, "Oyo State Roadmap for Accelerated Development, 2019-2023" with Economy (through agribusiness), Education, Healthcare and Security as priority areas.

However, just after assuming office, a segment of the numerous crises that upturned the innocence of Igangan to the mayhem at Iwo Road and the assassination of an Ibadan On-Air Personality, showed clearly about the renewed upsurge in crime in the 46 years old State.

But an investigation by the National Association of Online Security Reporters, NAOSRE revealed that the governor has taken measures to enhance safety in the State.

Among other things, the governor, within one year in office, was said to have procured and distributed 100 Rio Kia motor vehicles fully equipped with modern security communication gadgets; operationalised 615 Citizens' Emergency toll-free lines, streetlights under the Light-up Oyo Phase 1, about 49 JAC Pickup Vans for the new Police Mobile Force (PMF) Squadron (No. 72 PMF), refurbished 8 Toyota Hilux Pickup Vans and 1 Utility Lorry for the security outfits, enactment of the Oyo State Security Network Agency ('AMOTEKUN') Bill 2019 which was signed into law March 10, 2020.

In May 2021, by which time the governor was two years old in office, he had operationalised the Western Nigeria Security Network codenamed Amotekun in Oyo State in November 2020 and recruited and trained 1,500 Amotekun Corps members.

He also expanded and upgraded the Security Control Room and City, provided CCTV cameras in strategic locations in the state and provided more communication equipment for the security agencies as well as more brand new operational vehicles for the Nigeria Police, the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, 'Operation Burst' and Amotekun.

However, further investigations indicate that though governor Makinde may have purchased security equipment, the totality of what he has expended in security operations is a far cry from the sum total of his security votes in the past two and half years, raising the questions about his genuine concerns for the safety of life and property in Oyo State.

Unconfirmed report showed that while his predecessor, late governor Abiola Ajimobi ensured safety of life and property with a monthly security vote of N250 million, Seyi Makinde, upon assumption of office, increased the monthly vote to N1 billion, translating to about N34 billion in his 34-month old in office.

Insiders averred that governor Makinde is not truly concerned about the security of people in Oyo State.

Those who spoke to NAOSRE stressed that the young governor is more interested in his second tenure, a development that may ignited the passion to save for elections and careless about the series of unrest, kidnapping, attacks on citizens and killing in major towns and cities in the state due to poor security network in the State especially in Oke Ogun and Ibarapa zones.

However, there have been arguments about the over blown security situation in Oyo State.

This argument is held mostly by the governor's loyalists who maintain, at every available opportunity, that governor Makinde is a victim of political cross fire, essentially from the camp of opposition.

Though this might sound valid, Oyo State government's penchant for withholding valid information from journalists rubbishes such argument with many saying that the governor has so much to hide at the expense of the safety of life and property in the State.

This is much so as the request by NAOSRE, "To access documents of the security votes accrual to the Oyo State government in the past two years," had not yielded any response as of the time of filling this phase one report in the ongoing investigation.

NAOSRE is a body of publishers and professional journalists from the digital and conventional news platforms, made up of the finest hands in Nigeria's security reportage.

The association's goal is to professionally bridge the information gap between government, security agencies and the general public on security related matters.