Global Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

Vol.10, No.5, pp.25-38, 2022

Print ISSN: 2052-6350(Print)

Online ISSN: 2052-6369(Online)

Confronting the Challenges of Insecurity in Ondo State: The Role of Geospatial Surveillance and Mapping

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Citation: Adewale Akingbade (2022) Confronting the Challenges of Insecurity in Ondo State: The Role of Geospatial Surveillance and Mapping, Global Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, Vol.10, No.5, pp.25-38

ABSTRACT: *The situation of insecurity in Nigeria has ignited different levels of government to form their security networks. One such effort was made by the Ondo State Government by creating Amotekun Security Network for Ondo State. This is to improve the security of life and property of people in the state. This was a result of the persistent siege laid by marauders on the highways and farms in the state. There is no doubt about the good intensions of the Governor which he has backed up with action in the inauguration of Amotekun Security Network for Ondo State. However, the trend of combatting crime and terrorism in this 21st century has gone more sophisticated to the extent that conventional security architecture has become grossly inadequate, thus the need to upgrade security architecture to the level whereby security system and the personnel can combat the crime and even nip it in the bud before attacks. This can only be possible by complementing the conventional structure with available geospatial apparatus for security surveillance in confronting the challenges of insecurity not only in Ondo State but Nigeria at large. This paper thus appraises the challenges of insecurity in Ondo State and the role of geospatial surveillance and mapping. The paper was based on a review of literature and qualitative technique of analysis. This paper was structured into background information about Ondo State, an overview of security challenges in Nigeria with attention on Ondo State, the take-off of Ondo State Security Network Agency called Amotekun, and highlights on geospatial technology solutions for security surveillance in confronting insecurity challenges. This paper thus concludes that insecurity in Ondo State and the entire Nigeria could be curbed if security network can be complemented with geospatial surveillance and mapping technique.*

KEYWORDS: Insecurity, Amotekun, Geospatial Surveillance, Ondo State, AFRIGIST

INTRODUCTION: Brief Description of Ondo State

Ondo State was created out of the former Ondo Province of the former Western State in 1976. It has an area of 15,823 square kilometres. Ondo State lies between latitudes $5^0$45'N and $7^0$45'N of the Equator, and longitudes $4^0$21'E and $6^0$05'E of the meridians. It is bounded by Kogi State on the North, Edo on the east, Delta on the Southeast, and Osun and Ogun States on the West and by

the Bight of Benin of the Atlantic Ocean on the south (Figure 1). Ondo state includes mangrove-swamp forest near the Bight of Benin, a tropical rain forest in the centre part, and wooded savannah on the gentle slopes of the Yoruba Hills in the north. The last population census conducted in 2006 in Nigeria put the Ondo State population at 3,460,877. Using the annual growth rate of 2.665% (World Bank, 2020), the 2021 estimated population for Ondo State was. With annual population growth of 2.6%, the 2021 estimated population was 5,134,786. It is 18th on the list of the most populated states in the country. There are 18 local government areas in Ondo state.

Agriculture is the mainstay of the economy, and the chief products are cotton and tobacco from the north, cacao from the central part, and rubber and timber (teak and hardwoods) from the south and east; palm oil and kernels are cultivated for export throughout the state. Ondo State is Nigeria's chief cocoa-producing state. Ondo State shares a similar culture with most of the Western states in Nigeria. This particular part of the country is largely occupied by the Yorubas. There are, however, a number of languages between them. This list includes the Akure, Apoi, Idanre, Ijaw, Ikale, Ilaje, Ondo, Owo and Akoko. Ondo State is blessed with an abundance of industrious and hospitable people. It is also one of the many states in Nigeria that can publicly boast of its educated sons and daughters. However, with 2021 estimated population of 5,134,786, the majority of the Ondo people are traders, fishermen and farmers. Ondo State is blessed with many good tourist attractions located in different parts of the state.

In recent times, there have been challenges of insecurity in the state which has forced the state government to inaugurate a security network called "Amotekun". The trend of combatting insecurity in this 21st century involves more sophisticated rather than inadequate conventional security architecture, thus the need to upgrade security architecture to the level whereby modern security system using geospatial information and technology becomes essential. This paper thus appraises the challenges of insecurity in Ondo State and the role of geospatial surveillance and mapping. This was with specific objectives of providing background information about Ondo State, overviewing the security challenges in Nigeria with attention on Ondo State, examining the Ondo State Security Network Agency called Amotekun, and proffering geospatial technology solutions for security surveillance in confronting insecurity challenges.

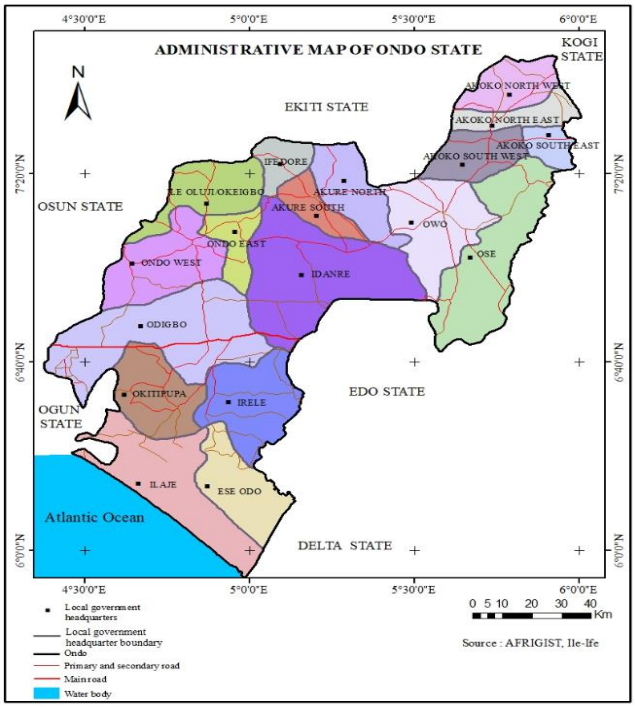

Figure 1: Ondo State map

Overview of Security Challenges in Nigeria

Nigeria is of great strategic relevance to the global world, in that 20 percent of the people in Sub - Saharan Africa is being housed in the country. The country in recent times has witnessed a series and chains of insecurity challenges with the perpetuation of current insurgencies, growing agitation for restructuring by various regions across Nigeria and increasing agitation for state police across Nigeria among others. Already, the nation is bedevilled with incessant ethnic /religious crises. With the debilitating challenges associated with the Boko Haram insurgence in the Northeast (Akingbade, Olabamiji and Ajala, 2022). In these past few years, Nigeria's ability to respond to security issues ranging from banditry, kidnapping, abduction, herdsmen attacks, and other criminal activities has waned considerably.

Globally, no country or region is spared as humanity is experiencing growing problems of insecurity (Alaigba Adzandeh, Chiwar, and Ejiofor, 2020). Worst still, in most emerging democracies in North Africa, the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa, there is a seeming combination of insurgency and political violence and indeed poverty, with the latter seriously fuelling militancy and consequently insecurity across these regions and the world (Alaigba *et al*., 2020). The increasing violence in different parts of Africa often leads to death and displacement of many people, and even disturbs the development of the region. For example, Nigeria is yet to

have victory over Boko Haram in the North East, bandits' attacks in the North West, and herders versus farmers in the North Central; and EndSARS Protest majorly in South West (Orabueze *et al.,* 2021; Akingbade, Olabamiji and Ajala, 2022). The incursion of the Fulani/ Herders into the Southwest in the last five years has their terrorist's tendency. It did not seem to perturb governors until they started to attack the notables in the society. The rate of kidnapping is now on the increase, not only in Ondo State but also in some other states of the South-west to the extent that no one can sleep with the two eyes closed and travelling on the highway and rural roads becomes a nightmare. Data on attacks within Ondo State revealed a list of gory situations considering the calibre of notables, the criminal had attacked in the recent past. Table 1 showed a list of some reported cases of kidnapping/abduction in Ondo State. Chief Olu Falae was kidnapped by six Fulani herdsmen at his Ilado farm in Akure on the 21st of September, 2015, on his 77th birthday, with the kidnappers demanding 100 million Naira ($500,000) as a ransom for his release. He was ultimately released on the 24th of September, 2015, after payment of ransom (Premium Times, 2017). Chief Mrs. Olutoyin Funke Olakunrin, Officer of the Federal Republic [OFR] of Nigeria, the daughter of the renowned Afenifere leader, Pa Reuben Fasoranti was attacked and killed by Fulani herdsmen gunmen on July 12th, 2019 between Kajola and Ore along Ondo-Ore Road in Ondo State. (The Punch, July 12, 2019).

Reported fatalities increased significantly in the first half of 2015 as compared to previous years. This was mainly in connection to a few incidents of criminality (bank robberies in Owo and Akoko North West LGAs) and piracy (Ilaje LGA) that killed dozens (Fund for Peace- FFP, 2018). FFP (2018) observed that in January and February of 2015, several were killed on their farms. Other issues, reported in Ondo included political tensions and cult violence (FFP, 2018). The reported insecurity situation in Ondo State between 2012 and 2015 is shown in Figure 2. The worrisome security situation in the state, especially in Akure, the state capital made headlines with the identification of a place called Ijoka in Akure metropolis where bandits do carry out their nefarious activities without being checked (The Punch, 2019).

Table 1: Some Reported Cases of Kidnapping/Abduction/Killings in Ondo State

	Cases	Location	Number of Victims	Date
1	Abduction by kidnappers. Among the victims was Rufus Giwa Polytechnic (RUGIPO) Lecturer, Taiwo Akinyemi, who was later killed.	Along Akure-Owo Expressway at Amurin Village in Owo LGA	4	December, 2018
2	Chief Olu Falae was kidnapped by six Fulani herdsmen.	In his farm, at Ilu-Abo, near Akure.	1	21st September, 2015
3	Kidnapping. Among the victims are Mr. Jide Ipinsagba and Mr. Bisi Ogungbemi.	Along Owo-Oba Akoko Road	5	November, 2019
4	The killing of a 75-year-grandmother	Ikare Akoko	1	2019
5	Killing of Khadijat, daughter of former Deputy Governor, Lasisi Oluboyo	Boyfriend's room, Adeyemi Alao	1	July, 2019
6	The Killing by gunmen/Kidnappers of Mrs. Olutoyin Funke Olakunrin, daughter of Afenifere leader, Fasoranti.	Between Kajola and Ore along Ondo-Ore Road	1	12th July, 2019
7	Kidnapping of commuters	Along the Akoko Road	9	June, 2020
8	Navy Commander abducted		1	May, 2020
9	Kidnapping of one Surajudeen Alao and another person	Ikun-Oba Akoko Road	2	August 15th 2020

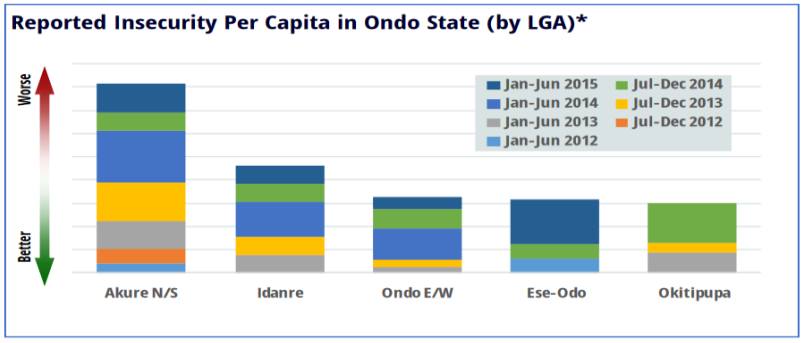

Figure 2: Reported insecurity in Ondo State – 2012-2015 (FFP, 2018)

Insecurity in Nigeria has taken different forms ranging from kidnapping, abduction, insurgency, militancy, armed robbery, and political thuggery among others. This has been attributed to a large number of unemployed and poor people (Osarense and Edomwonyi-Otu, 2020). Ozoigbo (2019) found out that the root of insecurity in various states of Nigeria could be traced to unemployment, illiteracy, poor leadership, the porosity of the borders, and proliferation of arms. Kaduna State is also experiencing serious herders and farmers crises (incessant attacks and resultant loss of lives and property). Various groups have proffer solutions to herders and farmers' crises in Kaduna. For example, the Women International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), and the Nigerian Women Mediators Network (NWMN), have urged the government at all levels to serve with compassion and ensure sustainable peace in the country (Africa-Press, 2020**)**. They explained the need for the NWMN network office in Kaduna to educate stakeholders in the conflict (Africa-Press, 2020**)**. The ethnic cleansing dimension and territorial expansion of a number of attacks as it seems in some parts of the country call for serious concern and a wake-up call for every ethnic nationality. It also portrays the country as gradually sliding into a failed state or a jungle where terrorism is the only surviving policy.

Ondo State Security Network Agency: Amotekun

In a move to confront the challenge of insecurity in Ondo State, on Tuesday, August 11, 2020, the Pioneer Amotekun Corps officers of the Ondo State security Network Agency were inaugurated (Todayng, 2020; The Punch, 2020; Sahara Reporters, 2020*b*). Amotekun is the security outfit created by the people of Southwest Nigeria to liberate themselves from a rampaging militia of Fulani herdsmen (Newspot, 2020). The Bill sets up the Corps was signed into law on the 4th of March 2020 (The Punch, 2020; Tribune, 2020). The Corps are expected to rid the state of criminal elements. According to the Ondo State Governor, Rotimi Akeredolu, the people of Ondo State are confronted with insecurity challenges such that marauders laid siege to the highways as well as the farmlands waiting to kidnap or devour anyone in sight (The Punch, 2020; Tribune, 2020). Rotimi Akeredolu, the governor of Ondo State, has also put in on the struggle for improved security of life and property not only in Ondo state but also for the entire southwest states.

He said "*My ambition is not worth the insecurity that our people are confronted, where at some point, people were afraid of traveling out of Ondo State. It was horrible that marauders laid siege to the highways as well as in the farmlands waiting to devour anyone in sight. … with the launch of the Amotekun, it shall be no retreat, no surrender; we are not going to be intimidated or blackmailed."* (Vanguard, August 12, 2020 pp10; The Punch, August 12, 2020 pp8).

The successful inauguration/passing-out ceremony of 500 Amotekun Corp officers was recorded in Akure, Ondo State. Those in the second phase were later undergoing training (Vanguard, 2020). Amotekun was first launched in Ibadan in January 2020 to address the security needs of the Southwest States in Nigeria (Vanguard, 2020).

The effort is a good step made by the Southwest Governors, one could notice that since the inauguration of Amotekun in March at Ibadan, it sent a signal to the rest of the country and the rate of the incursion of bandits has declined but this is not to say that they had retreated. The report has it that their several bandits' camps in various locations scattered across the forest of the southwest. Then it is not yet celebration time but a call for vigilance until all criminal elements are routed out of all nooks and cranes of our territory.

Incidentally, Ondo State shared boundaries with Kogi State, North Central, making the state more vulnerable to cross-border attacks. Thus, the need for strengthening the security system of border communities in Ondo State, while inland cities, towns and villages are well policed too. To achieve this, a conventional security system needs to be upgraded with the latest Geospatial technology to ease surveillance, intelligence gathering, analysis of security information and rapid response to the occasion in real time.

The Role of Geospatial Intelligence/ Surveillance and Mapping in Fighting Insecurity

Geospatial Intelligence, also known as GEOINT, is the "exploitation and analysis of imagery and geospatial information to describe, assess, and visually depict physical features and geographically referenced activities on the earth that have national security implications" (NGA, 2018). GEOINT includes all aspects of imagery and geospatial information and services. It encompasses, but is not limited to the analysis of literal imagery; geospatial data; and information technically derived from the processing, exploitation, literal, and non-literal analysis of spectral, spatial, and temporal fused products (National Research Council, 2013). These types of data can be collected on stationary and moving targets by electro-optical, synthetic aperture radar (SAR), related sensors, and non-technical means (including geospatial information acquired by personnel in the field). Without the effective application of geospatial information, the nation and its armed forces are vulnerable to security risks and threats.

Geospatial intelligence is augmented today with machine learning technology and socio media. It uses integrated information both in space and time to describe, explain, and forecast human activities for decision making and action taking. In other words, GEOINT is the means by which data and information are collected, manipulated, geospatially reasoned, and disseminated to decision-makers.

Geospatial Intelligence provides a platform to answer through spatial analyses, the following questions:

- Where I am?
- Where are the friendlies?
- Where are the enemies?
- When might they move?
- Where are the non-combatants?

- Where are the obstacles, natural or man-made and how do I navigate among them?
- What is the environment? What does it mean? What is the impact?

Answering such questions necessitates the availability of spatial data, appropriate training and adequate skills to process them and extract useful information. Studies have shown that Geospatial intelligence and mapping is a useful tool in national security for sustainable development to confront or tackle insecurity challenges and crime incidence. For instance, Olajuyigbe, Omole, Bayode, and Adenigba (2016) applied Geographic Information Systems (GIS) as a tool for mapping out the area liable to crime in the core area of Akure, Nigeria. They utilized crime incidence reports gotten from the internet, archives and Nigeria Police Force (NPF). Both spatial and statistical analyses were carried out using the appropriate tools such as Neighbourhood and Correlation Analysis. Their work revealed that the transport route cutting through Akure metropolis is prone to criminal activity. Another study was conducted by Oyinloye, Olamiju and Otokiti (2017) on the spatial distribution of crime in selected communities in Akure using Geospatial technology and a participatory approach. The analysis showed that theft was the major crime and was mostly concentrated in areas with poor building conditions.

Various studies have shown how geospatial intelligence has helped nations of the world to develop and to sustain the development, and how geospatial intelligence has assisted and can assist in taking care of cases of terrorism. Some of the technology highlighted include the use of satellite imagery, the need for dedicated security satellite to curb terrorism, the need for integration of all database within the State, etc. Some important geospatial tools applicable in security surveillance are: Thermal Infrared Imageries, Application of Photogrammetry for Surveillance, Motion detection, Global Navigation Satellite Systems (GNSS) and Remote Sensing, and Space Age Soldier.

Thermal Infrared Imageries:

- ❖ Thermal imaging is a boon to security agencies because of its day and night working capability and ability to perform well in all weather conditions.
- ❖ Thermal detectors capture the infrared radiation emitted by all objects above absolute zero temperature.
- ❖ The temperature variations of the captured scene are represented as a thermogram.

Thermal imaging has a large number of applications in security and defence.

- ❑ It is popularly used by the army and navy for border surveillance and law enforcement.
- ❑ Ship collision avoidance and guidance systems and for monitoring the coastal areas to curb any unlawful activities.
- ❑ They are used in military aviation to identify, locate and target the enemy forces.
- ❑ Strategic systems for early warning of intercontinental ballistic missile launches

- Methods for the detection of atmospheric contaminants, such as poison gas, under field conditions
- Aids for the precision delivery of weaponry (including passive, active, and laser designator guidance techniques), and sensor systems for reconnaissance and surveillance.

Application of Photogrammetry for Surveillance

Insecurity could be effectively tackled using drones, especially on the highways, farms and border areas, with the use of drones and handheld thermal imager systems as surveillance (see Figures 3-5). According to the report, the Nigerian Institution of Surveyors (NIS) and security experts, including Ade Abolurin, retired commandant-general; Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps have given advice to President Muhammadu Buhari on the usage of drones to fight insecurity and insurgency (GIS Resources, 2015).

Figure 3: Unmanned Aerial vehicle for surveillance

Figure 4: Drone for Surveillance by U.S. Army DoD (Source: GIS Resources, 2015)

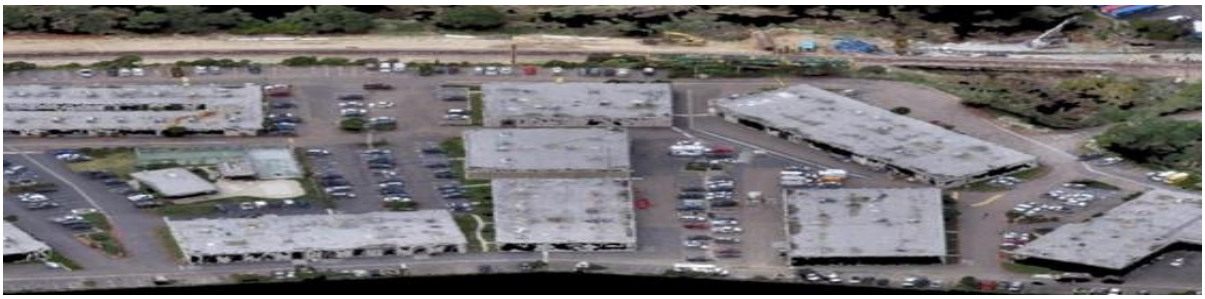

Figure 5: Aerial Imaging – Photogrammetry (Source: GIS Resources, 2015)

Motion detection

Motion detection is an important task of Automatic Target Recognition (ATR) and perimeter monitoring systems. ATR is the field of science to detect, track, classify targets from video and signal streams. Perimeter or border monitoring mainly consists of detecting any unwanted or unexpected movement of persons or vehicles in and around the area under surveillance. Thermal imaging is an integral part of ATR systems because of its ability to operate in all weather conditions. Some handheld surveillance systems are shown in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Handheld thermal Imager/ surveillance systems

Global Navigation Satellite Systems (GNSS) and Remote Sensing

The use of Remote Sensing is an integral part of the contemporary operations to combat insecurity:

- Low-bandwidth uses of GPS
- Voice communications
- Signals intercepts
- Low-resolution radar remote sensing imagery
- High-bandwidth uses of live video streaming
- Direct media broadcasting
- High-resolution optical remote sensing imagery.

AFRIGIST: A dependable partner in Geospatial Information Technology

The African Regional Institute for Geospatial Information Science and Technology (AFRIGIST), formerly known as Regional Centre for Training in Aerospace Surveys (RECTAS) was established in 1972 under the auspices of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) as an educational "one-stop" solution institution that trains highly skilled manpower in geospatial information science and technology, and its applications. Since its inception in 1972, AFRIGIST has been contributing immensely to the quest for solutions to societal challenges in its member states in general and Nigeria the host country in particular, through capacity building and research.

A research study carried out at AFRIGIST used geospatial intelligence to assess terrorist activities in North East, Nigeria. The study analyzed the terrain configuration and land cover, assessed the spatial pattern of terrorist attacks, identify terrorists' hotspots and assessed the deployment tracks for optimum military operations. Information extracted from satellite imageries (both at medium and High spatial resolution), Digital Terrain Models and GPS coordinates of important features, combined with statistics of terrorist attacks, were integrated. Spatial distribution of terrorist attacks, directional distribution of terrorist attacks, spatial distribution of terrorist hotspots, Optimal sites for deployment of artillery weapon, Optimal sites for deployment of armoured tanks, and optimal sites for Helicopter Landing Zones maps were generated from the spatial analyses and can be used for planning purpose. The study recommended that the military, researchers and relevant government agencies should synergize and come up with a geospatial framework which could serve as a basis for monitoring, assessing and tracking insurgent activities. This should include the training of officers and men, the revision of the country's base map and the use of real-time imageries. A similar study was also carried out in the northern part of Burkina Faso.

In 2019, a customized training in Geospatial Data Processing and Analysis for Military and Paramilitary applications, on the request of the Nigerian Air Force (NAF), was executed by AFRIGIST. Participants in the training were officers from Nigerian Air Force (NAF), Nigeria Police Force (NPF), Nigerian Customs Service (NCS) and the Nigeria Immigration Service (NCS). They were exposed to Remote Sensing techniques, image analysis, extraction of terrestrial features, spatial analyses and scenarios for military operations, use of Unmanned Arial Vehicles and data processing, etc. In 2017, officers from Nigerian Navy also sojourned at AFRIGIST for one week for customized training in RADAR data processing and photogrammetric applications. In July- August, 2020, AFRIGIST was engaged in training of Air Force personnel on some aspects of geospatial intelligence gathering, processes and deployment of geospatial tools for national security. AFRIGIST is the right Institution to connect with for the integration of geospatial technology with conventional security architecture to combat rising security challenges in Nigeria and particularly Ondo State.

CONCLUSION

This paper concludes that re-engineering security architecture to confront insecurity challenges in the 21st century required an integration of the conventional approach with geospatial technology for surveillance, prevention, and rapid response to security challenges. This will ensure a sustainable peaceful environment that will allow residents to do their legitimate enterprise either in the urban or rural areas and thus contribute to the economic prosperity of our dear state. A peaceful enabling environment is a sine qua non to the attraction of serious investors to the state which will boost the state economy and generate sizable employment for our teeming youthful population.

Geospatial Information Technology provides the spatial dimension to dealing with insecurity challenges. Without understanding and being able to answer the complex questions of What? Where? When? Who? How? and Why? It will be difficult to track, apprehend or prevent criminal elements in their nefarious activities. The Spatial Dimension delivers a critical or foundational component for Ondo State to protect her citizens and develop. No aspect of development (for example, education, medical services, agriculture, rural and urban development) can be achieved without effective security. In the same manner, effective security is not attainable without geospatial surveillance and mapping.

Geospatial surveillance and mapping help to plan protective measures for the citizens, strategize search and rescue operations in case of disaster and conflict, plan security missions and attacks on criminals and enemies and also support the development of security infrastructure. Ondo State Government will have an optimum return on its investment in security and have accelerated growth and development with the appropriate use of geospatial information technology and mapping. The NIS branch of Ondo State has a lot to do in this regard, especially to sensitise the Ondo State Government and political leaders on the importance geospatial information technology and mapping for security and development. No nation or state can develop without adequate security based on geospatial surveillance and mapping.

This paper recommends that Ondo State needs to invest more in the security infrastructure. It is encouraged to employ the methods used by developed nations, which is the deployment of geospatial technology for security surveillance. The way to go is to integrate geospatial technology with the conventional security architecture. Ondo State should partner with reputable institutions (like AFRIGIST) for the process and deployment of the new technology which will include capacity building in geospatial technology for security surveillance. Amotekun Corps should be trained on how to use Geospatial technology/drones to fight crime. Amotekun should operate like the modern-day soldier with full equipment/gadgets. The above recommendations will contribute to the improvement of security in Ondo State and also usher in unmatched development of the state and entire Nigeria.

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