

<https://fepi-jopas.federalpolyilaro.edu.ng>

Assessment of The State Security Actors' Response To Goods Smuggling In Yewa Region, Ogun State

¹ELESIN, O. G [✉], ²EMEHINOLA, O. M. & ³ABIFARIN, J. A.

¹Department of Urban and Regional Planning; The Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro.

²Department of Architectural Technology; The Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro.

³Department of Quantity Surveying; The Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro.

✉ ganiy.elesin@federalpolyilaro.edu.ng

ABSTRACT

This study assesses the response of state security actors towards eradicating goods smuggling in Nigeria especially among the people of Yewa region of Ogun State. The study objectives are to identify categories of pronounced or popular goods smuggling; identify major routes for goods smuggling; and identifying major principal state security actors in charge of anti-goods smuggling. Relevant literature was reviewed, while secondary and primary data collection sources were equally used to obtain useful and relevant information for the study. Tables and simple discussion were used to present and analyse the collected data; it was discovered that about 90% to 94% youths between the ages of 18 to 53 are usually involved in the goods smuggling activities in the study area with about 66% rice and 20% frozen foods (Turkey and Chicken) identified as the major types of goods and services for smuggling. The Study also revealed that the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) is the major and principal state security actor in charge of anti-goods smuggling activities in the study area. At the same time, Sango-Atan/Ota-Owode-Idiroko and Papalanto-Ilaro-Oja/Odan-Ohunbe axes were identified as the major/popular routes for the goods smuggling activities. Conclusively, the study recommended, among others, the creation of an enabling and suitable environment for the establishment of manufacturing industries for job opportunities for the youths as well as regular public enlightenment for community members on the anti-smuggling functions of state security actors.

Keywords: Actors, Goods Smuggling, Smuggling, State Security.

1.0 Introduction

Smuggling is an illegal, unlawful, and criminal act which involves the process of taking in or out, sending in or out as well as bringing in or out goods and services from one country to another secretly and illegally (Concise Oxford Dictionary, 2020). This act negates the provision of the law, hence punishable under the law, because it is a way of robbing a nation of its valuable economic growth and development, thereby reducing or shortchanging the expected total Gross Domestic Product that is supposed to be realized by a particular country in terms of Revenue generation.

Goods smuggling that tends to be regarded as illegal activities have turned out to be a usual and normal business and practices among majority of Nigerians especially the residents and people of border towns particularly in Yewa region of Ogun State because of their closeness to the border between

Nigeria and the Republic of Benin. However, to eradicate this barbaric act, the Nigeria government have saddled the responsibilities and tasks with the state security actors whose major works is to ensure complete stoppage and eradication by bringing into book for legal punishment those involved in this illegal and unlawful activities.

However, the practice of cross-border trade activities has been a way of exchanging goods and services between 2 or more countries. The proceeds of these activities form an integral part of the economic growth and development of any nation. Each nation across the world adopts different modalities in ensuring a seamless and successful trade with its partners. The activities of this trade are controlled by some specific government agencies responsible for ensuring compliance with stipulated rules and regulations, simply referred to as state security actors that comprise both the military and para-military personnel. Meanwhile, in Nigeria, the Nigeria Customs Service

<https://fepi-jopas.federalpolyilaro.edu.ng>

(NCS) is the major and principal state security actor among all these agencies and the NCS was positioned as the lead agency in the management of the seaports, airports and the nation's borders. The NCS is statutorily vested with the functions of revenue collection, facilitation of trade and suppression of smuggling. The suppression of smuggling becomes imperative due to the contravention of the rules and regulations associated with international or cross-border trade by the illicit practice (Mathias, 2018).

Legitimate cross-border trade activities are encouraged due to their prospects of developing the economy of the nation, unlike smuggling. Smuggling is a crime of taking, sending, or bringing goods secretly and illegally into or out of a country. The consequence of smuggling is very dangerous for any economy. It destroys the prospects of the economy and hinders the growth of infant industries that will industrialize the economy. It also poses a threat to national security with **2.1 General Overview of Customs Services and Nigeria Customs Service.**

The customs service plays a major role in the economic wellbeing of any given country. Equally, a significant aspect of the same is that it plays a key role in the sovereignty of a country. Customs is therefore entitled to the role of controlling whatever enters or exists a certain country. Coupled with that, customs play another major key role in the facilitation of trade. Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) is the primary internal income generator in the country, with Nigeria Customs coming in second. To have a substantial influence on national coverage, the agency recruited 5,000 Nigerians to the services in 2009.

To enhance the convenience of trade, Nigerian Customs has upgraded all of its processes in the crucial area of human resources and implemented cutting-edge information and scanning technology to improve the performance of the officers. The primary goal of monitoring is to prevent the importation of narcotics, guns and ammunition, hazardous blades, endangered animal and plant species and their products, the spread of animal and plant illnesses, the export of national cultural objects, and money laundering. Furthermore, customs enforce restrictions imposed on specific commodities to ensure that the goods are appropriately declared for tariff reasons. As a result, it is in charge of ensuring that different subsidies are paid on time. (Nigeria Customs 2017).

Nigeria Customs Service is headed by the Comptroller General who was assisted by (6) six Deputy-Comptroller General, heading different

unlawful importation of dangerous weapons which could be subsequently used by criminal elements to destroy lives and properties of innocent people in society.

Smuggling is one of the major cross-border crimes that are a threat to the nation. The activities of smuggling are perpetrated by unscrupulous elements that prefer it to legitimate trade. In Yewa land and other areas in Ogun State, prohibited and controlled items such as Rice, Frozen foods, Premium Motor Spirit (PMS) and Cannabis Sativa, among others, are often smuggled across the border to various destinations. It is against this backdrop, that this study tries to assess the response of state security actors particularly the Nigeria Customs Service towards determining the sustainable means of reducing or eradicating smuggling to the barest minimum with less or no casualty to the host communities in Nigeria especially among the people of yewa region in Ogun State.

departments which include (i) Finance, Administration and Technical, (ii) Tariff and Trade (iii) Strategic Research and Policy (iv) Investigation and Inspection (v) Human Resource Development and (vi) Excise and Industrial Incentives.

The Comptroller-General of the Nigeria Customs Service is in charge of general administration and service direction. He is the service's accounting officer and vice chairman of the Nigeria Customs Service Board, which is chaired by the Honourable Minister of Finance of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (Nigeria Customs 2017).

Nigeria's customs role and goals in the twenty-first century are to prosper in a globalised and highly competitive society. The function of a gatekeeper in customs has not and will not become obsolete, as several trends indicate a greater and more complex role for Nigeria's customs agency. In the next years, the arduous process of integrating sophisticated international practices such as a single window allowing clients to interact with only one agency, and a well-coordinated border management focusing on border functions in a single organisation will be witnessed. More specifically, the authorised economic operator (AEO) regime uses track records and self-policing to allow customs to forego interventions against the clearly trustworthy or, at the very least, to limit intervention to a post-clearance audit. Intelligence-driven risk management concentrates efforts on cargoes and firms that must likely be noncompliant (Customs Modernization in Nigeria 2012).

<https://fepi-jopas.federalpolyilaro.edu.ng>

It is difficult to forecast any institution's future role in trade facilitation because there is no single correct or universally applicable response to anticipated trends in customs, as each country will respond in ways best suited to its needs, operating environment, national priorities, and cultural heritage. (World Customs Journal 2008) Considering the several functions that Nigeria Customs normally plays in the economy, one of the customs tasks has to do with revenue collection for the federal government. The performance of Nigeria Customs in 2017 was hailed as exceptional, with a total revenue collection of N1.10 trillion. To accomplish this milestone, the services used many steps, including strategic redeployment of officers and personnel, reforming and restricting of customs intelligence unit operatives, and a regime of timely

2.2 Mandate of the Ogun Area Command of the Nigeria Customs Service in Ogun State as regards Goods Smuggling

The Ogun Area Command of NCS is saddled with the responsibility of revenue collection, suppression of smuggling and facilitation of trade that is legitimate. For emphasis, the Command is essentially an Enforcement area vested, mainly, with the mandate of anti-smuggling operations in the whole of Ogun State, Nigeria, which borders the Republic of Benin. Under its statutory function of suppressing smuggling, the Command co-ordinates intensive round-the-clock anti-smuggling activities in its Area of Responsibility (AoR). This has resulted in huge seizures of smuggled goods, illicit drugs, and other psychoactive substances. The activities of Customs operatives in Ogun State and in Yewa Region are regulated by law. For example, section 158 of Customs and Excise Management Act (CEMA) CAP C45 LFN of 2004 empowers Customs officers to patrol freely; sections 147 and 148, respectively, empower Customs officers to search premises and licensed premises; section 150 gives Customs officers power to search persons and section 8 gives Customs officers the power of police officers in respect of carrying out and enforcing provisions of Customs laws. This means that Customs can arrest, detain and prosecute persons who commit Customs-related offences. Section 167 empowers Customs officers to seize or detain goods suspected of being smuggled into the country.

2.3 Danger Inherent in Smuggling

There are numerous negative effects of smuggling activities. Prominent among them, as they affect or may affect the lives of the people of Yewa

rewards for hard performance and punishment for violators. Other methods include the possibility for automation, tracking, monitoring, and recovering lost revenues; Nigeria customs promote officers and men of the services solely on merit rather than linked forms; and purposeful stakeholder involvement throughout the country. Furthermore, the anti-smuggling crusade was a huge success, with the agency working tirelessly and recording over 4,000 assorted seizures worth over 11 billion naira. The seizures, according to NCS, include 2,671 pump-action rifles, dangerous drugs, foreign band rice, and smuggled vehicles, among other things. Even valiant officers are killed in the course of duty (Punch Newspaper 2017)

Region as well as Customs Operatives, including Loss of lives and properties, health implications, gross financial loss, and increased economic hardship.

2.3.1 Loss of Lives and Properties.

Loss of lives and properties is an imminent danger associated with Smuggling. Smuggling has a very great social cost in terms of death. Many valuable lives of smugglers, Customs operatives and other law enforcement agents and innocent community people have been lost to smuggling through gun exchange between smugglers and a team of law enforcement agents. Many properties of Customs and those of the communities have been lost to clashes in the past.

2.3.2 Health Implications.

Most consumable items are not good for consumption due to their mode of concealment during the process of smuggling to evade security check and arrest. For instance, the Ogun Area Command has on several occasions uncovered concealment of rice in vehicle petrol tanks and other compartments as well as fuel jerry cans. Sometimes some rice that are smuggled might have expired and must be repackaged by smugglers to be sold to unsuspecting members of the public.

2.3.3 Increased Economic Hardship.

Economic hardships increase with nefarious activities of smuggling. For instance, smuggling of PMS in jerry cans, out of the country, which ought to have been sold to people within the community would make it very scarce. The implication of this may warrant going far distance to buy it when in need, or

<https://fepi-jopas.federalpolyilaro.edu.ng>

resort to getting black market of the PMS at higher rates. This may in turn hike prices of some items or consumables in the community. The buoyancy of smugglers because of huge financial gain from smuggling activities is another factor to consider.

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Sources of Data Collection

Both primary and secondary sources of data collection were used for this research with the aid of structured questionnaires as main research instruments.

3.2 Target Population

The target populations for the research are both the state security actors majorly Nigeria Customs Service and the residents of the selected border towns within the study area.

3.3 Sampling Techniques

Purposive, Stratified and Systematic sampling techniques were used for the study in the following proportions:

- (i) Purposive sampling techniques for the selection of routes and towns for the goods smuggling activities in the study area which are Sango-Atan/Ota-Owode-Idiroko route or axis and Papalanto-Ilaro-Oja/Odan-Ohunbe route or axis while Idiroko and Ohunbe was equally chosen being the center base for the smuggling activities along these routes and axes.
- (ii) Stratified sampling technique was used for the selection of interviewed state security actors along the selected routes based on their locations as they were found in different locations with similar responsibilities. the interviewed residents
- (iii) Systematic sampling technique was used for of both Idiroko and Ohunbe Communities respectively.

3.4 Sample Frame and Size

Officials of Nigeria Custom Service and residents of the selected study areas were picked for the administration of designed questionnaire whereby 10 officers of custom services and 250 residents of the selected study areas were interviewed with 100 and 150 respondents from Ohunbe and Idiroko respectively.

3.5 Data Analysis

Collected data were presented and analyzed with the aid of frequency tables and a simple discussion for better understanding of the readers.

4.0 Results and Discussion

act of spending money may inflate the costs of goods and services, especially house rent. It will make standard of living high, competitive, and unaffordable to the common man.

4.1 State Security Actors' challenges towards effective response to goods smuggling.

Table 1 shows the hierarchy of different challenges facing the state security actors at effectively discharge their duties as reported by the selected respondent officers such as (i) inadequate manpower and logistics; (ii) misconception of the anti-smuggling function of customs by members of the community; (iii) hostility of members of the community; and (iv) insufficient or lack of required ammunition.

4.1.1 Inadequate Manpower and Logistics.

It was reported that the number of workforces in Ogun Area Command of Nigerian Custom Service is not commensurate with the vast border lines and several illegal routes in Ogun State. The available manpower is not adequate for police to haunt all nooks and crannies where goods smuggling activities take place. Inadequate logistics and absence of modern equipment are affecting the anti-smuggling activities of the Command.

4.1.2 Misconception of the Anti-smuggling function of Customs by Members of the Community.

The anti-smuggling mandate of the Command is often misconstrued by members of the community whereby it was believed that the anti-smuggling activities of Customs are deliberate act of depriving smugglers of their "lawful" means of livelihood. Smuggling is also perceived as the birth right of those in the border community that must be carried out unhindered. Therefore, any activities against such act are perceived to be acts of wickedness and thus the state security actors are regarded as enemies of the communities.

4.1.3 Hostility of Members of the Community.

The operatives of the Command have over time faced stiff opposition from members of the Community in the course of their duty. This is evidenced by many instances of connivance by the people of the community with smugglers carrying out

<https://fepi-jopas.federalpolyilaro.edu.ng>

mob attacks on officers and blocking of access road to where smuggled goods were harboured. The effects of these have led to casualty on both side such as death or loss of government properties.

4.1.4 Insufficient or lack of required ammunition

The operatives of the command have always been facing the problem of insufficient or lack of required as well as upgraded sophisticated weapons and ammunition to fight with the smugglers who possessed more sophisticated weapons than the state security actors. This challenge has made them handicapped at times in discharging or carrying out their duties efficiently.

Table 1: Hierarchy of Challenges facing the state security actors as reported by selected officers (Nigerian Custom Services)

S/N	Types of Challenges in Hierarchy
1	Inadequate Manpower and Logistics.
2	Misconception of the Anti-smuggling function of Customs by Members of the Community.
3	Hostility of Members of the Community.
4	Insufficient or lack of required ammunition

Source: Field survey, 2023

4.2 Major/Popular Routes for Smuggling Activities

It was also revealed by the operatives of the command that the most popular routes for the

smuggling activities in Yewa region are Sango-Atan-Owode-Idiroko and Papalanto-Ilaro-Oja/Odan-Ohunbe axes respectively, as indicated in Table 2.

Table 2: Major/Popular Routes for Smuggling Activities

S/N	Major/Popular Routes for Smuggling Activities
1	Sango-Atan-Owode-Idiroko axis
2	Papalanto-Ilaro-Oja/Odan-Ohunbe
3	Eegua-Igbogila-Aiyetoro axis
4	Ilara-Imeko-Afon axis

Source: Field survey, 2023.

4.3 Category of People Engaging in Goods Smuggling in the Study Areas

Table 3 shows categories of people involved in goods smuggling according to investigation from the study

areas are basically the youths whose ages range between 18 years to 53 years which recorded about 92% and 94% of the entire population in the study areas respectively.

Table 3: Categories of Respondents

S/N	Age	Idiroko(F)	(%)	Ohunbe(F)	(%)
1	9-17	7	4.7	6	6
2	18-26	26	17.3	22	22
3	27-35	53	35.4	32	32
4	36-44	41	27.3	26	26
5	45-53	11	7.3	8	8
6	54-62	8	5.3	5	5
7	Above 62	4	2.7	1	1
	Total	150	100	100	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

4.4 Major Types of Goods Smuggling

<https://fepi-jopas.federalpolyilaro.edu.ng>

The most popular and major types of goods smuggling in the study areas were identified to be Rice which recorded for about 66%, followed by Frozen foods (Turkey & Chicken) with 20% with fairly used

materials (such as clothes, shoes and leather bags), Petrol, Cannabis and Drugs which recorded for about 6%, 4%, 2% and 2% respectively as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Major Types of Goods Smuggling

S/N	Types Goods	Idiroko(F)	(%)	Ohunbe(F)	(%)
1	Rice	99	66	66	66
2	Frozen Foods	30	20	20	20
3	Fairly used materials	9	6	6	6
4	Petrol	6	4	4	4
5	Cannabis	3	2	2	2
6	Drugs	3	2	2	2
	Total	150	100	100	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

4.5 Average Monthly Income Generated from the Activities

Study as indicated in Table 5 reveals that majority of the youths that involved in the smuggling activities usually generated between ₦90,000 and ₦300,000 monthly as income in rice and frozen foods

smuggling which recorded highest percentage of about 84% compared to other goods that yielded between 8%(Fairly used materials), 5%(Petrol), 1.5%(Cannabis) and 1.5%(Drugs) respectively as a result of the popularity, acceptability and market values for the goods.

Table 5: Average Monthly Income Generated

S/N	Types of Goods	Average Monthly Income (₦)	Idiroko(F)	(%)	Ohunbe(F)	(%)
1	Drugs	10,000-30,000	2	1.5	1	1.5
2	Cannabis	30,001-50,000	2	1.5	1	1.5
3	Petrol	50,001-70,000	8	5	5	5
4	Fairly used materials	70,001-90,000	12	8	8	8
5	Frozen foods	90,001-110,000	21	14	14	14
6	Rice	110,001-300,000	105	70	70	70
	Total		150	100	100	100

Source: Field survey, 2023.

Summary of findings from the study include:

- Inadequate Manpower and Logistics.
- Misconception of the Anti-smuggling function of Customs by Members of the Community.
- Hostility of Members of the Community.
- Insufficient or lack of required ammunition.
- Popular Routes for the Smuggling Activities are Sango-Atan-Owode-Idiroko and Papalanto-Ilaro-Oja/Odan-Ohunbe axes respectively according to investigation.
- Category of People engaging in Goods Smuggling in the Study Areas are basically the youths whose ages ranges between 18 years to 53 years which recorded about 92% and 94% of the entire population in the study areas respectively.

- Average Monthly Income Generated from the Activities ranges between ₦90,000 and ₦300,000 while rice and frozen foods are identified as most popular goods smuggling

5.2 Conclusion and Recommendation

The Ogun Area Command of Nigeria Custom Service should be given a mandate of collecting revenue, facilitating legitimate trade, and suppressing smuggling in Yewa region and Ogun State in particular. The anti-smuggling activities of the Command are in conformity to the relevant sections of the CEMA Cap C45 LFN 2004. Smuggling is inimical to the socio-economic wellbeing of the people of Yewa region. It leads to loss of lives and properties, it has health implications, it inflicts gross financial loss to perpetrators and increases economic hardship to members of the community.

<https://fepi-jopas.federalpolyilaro.edu.ng>

In line with the findings from the study, the following recommendations were made:

➤ **Provision of Adequate Manpower and Logistics.**

The workforce of the Command could be increased adequately to enhance their strength and performance. Provision of adequate logistics as well as modern equipment would also ensure effectiveness and efficiency of the Command's anti-smuggling operations. The NCS management is working assiduously to equip the Command with more manpower, logistics and advanced technology that would aid its activities and ensure safety of officers as well as those of the members of the host communities.

➤ **Consistent Enlightenment of Members of the Community on the Anti-smuggling Function of Customs.**

The members of the community need to be better informed and consistently enlightened on the mandate of Customs to carry out anti-smuggling activities. It is essential for them to understand that Customs do not make laws or formulate policies. It's only implementing or enforces the laws and fiscal policies formulated by the Federal Government of Nigeria

(FGN). Therefore, Customs could not be perceived as enemies of the people of host communities.

➤ **Friendliness of Members of the Community.**

The Customs operatives need the support and cooperation of the residents of Yewa region for a better society. The efforts of Customs are to develop the economy and secure the nation's border lines. People need to desist from attacking officers and obstructing them on duty. Some of the Customs operatives are part of the community. They are fathers, mothers, uncles, aunties, sons, daughters, brothers, and sisters to members of the host communities.

➤ **Creation of an enabling and suitable environment for the establishment of manufacturing industries for job opportunities for the youths**

Nigeria government both at federal and state levels should as a matter of urgency and necessity create enabling and suitable environment in all ramifications that will encourage establishment of industries by both indigenous and foreign investors as a means of job creation and opportunities for the teeming youth population in the study areas.

References

Annual Customs Report (2016). Gargo cranes at Apapa port, Lagos Nigeria. 2(1) pp. 11

Concise Oxford English Dictionary (2020). 5th edition.

Customs and Excise Management Act (CEMA) Cap C45 LFN 2004. Nigeria Customs Services

Customs Reforms and Modernization in Nigeria (2012). Towards a comprehensive vision. Lagos: Nigeria customs publishers, pp. 19-25

Mathias, O.O (2018). Risks and Social Repercussions Inherent in Smuggling: A Sociological Investigation of Badagry-Seme and Owode-Idiroko International Border Communities in Ogun State, Nigeria.

The Nation Newspaper (2014). Revenue Collection Decline-Nigeria Customs So Far. pp. 44.

Nigeria Customs (2017). Brief history of Nigeria Customs Service. Available.

https://customs.gov.ng/About/historical_information.php Accessed January 5, 2018

Nigeria Customs Services (2022). Ogun Area Command Monthly Seizure Report of January to December 2022.

Punch newspaper (2017). Nigeria Customs generate 1 trillion-naira revenue in 2017. Available at <http://punchng.com/customs-generates-n1tn-revenue-in-2017/> Accessed April 2, 2018.

World Customs Journal (2008). World Customs Organization. In conjunction with the Nigeria Customs Service. An Overview of Customs Reforms to facilitate trade, Journal of International Commerce and Economic. 17(5)20-28. Available. <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/world-customs-journalvol10-no1> Accessed 29, January 2018.