The Church and Security via Use of ICT in Ikwerre, Rivers State, South-South, Nigeria

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Abstract

Security is a global phenomenon and activity aimed at protecting the human person, institution, property, and indeed a country against attack or danger. The church as a human institution is not exempted from security challenges in spite her divine background. Since the church exists in the human society, it is no doubt exposed to security challenges. In Nigeria, some churches and her members are victims of insecurity. These were killed in cold blood, kidnapped, and their worship buildings and properties destroyed while worshipping. These heinous crimes would have been nipped in the bud and prevented if effective ICT was deployed. The information, communication and technology (ICT) has been observed to have influenced almost all human sectors including security. This paper is concerned about the use of ICT in solving security challenges by the church in its area of operation; and this was achieved by adopting the historical descriptive and phenomenological methods of data collection. The paper suggested how ICT devices and applications would be used by the churches in Ikwerreland to curb and avert security challenges in the area. This paper posits that until the Ikwerre people and the church effectively and efficiently apply ICT in her security architecture, insecurities will persist in the area. This paper recommends the effective and efficient use of ICT by the Church in Ikwerre.

Introduction

Security is the business of everybody, tribe and ethnicity. Ikwerre ethnicity is one of the ethnic groups in Nigeria, found in four local government areas of Rivers State – Ikwerre, Port Harcourt, Obio/Akpor, and Emohua. Ikwerre like other ethnicities in Nigeria have been bedevilled with security challenges, and the Christian church has been one of the greatest casualties. In Nigeria, cases abound of devastated churches and members as a

result of insurgence, Boko Haram attacks, and banditry. Forty-one Christians were slaughtered in Churches at Madalla, Jos, Gadaka and Damaturu on 25th December, 2011; thirty-seven Christian worshippers were killed by Boko Haram at Mubi, Yola, Gombi and Maiduguri on 5th and 6th January, 2012; about two hundred Christians were murdered in several villages in Borno State on 2nd June 2014 among others (Tenong and Babatunde: 2020).

Over the years, the issue of insecurity challenges such as kidnapping, armed robbery, and terrorism have been discussed by scholars (Egwemi, 2020). From their perspective, a day hardly passed by in Nigeria without a sad news of brutality, armed robbery, kidnappings, extra judicial killing, banditry, terrorism, and militarization being reported. The Church and her properties are part of the society, and deserve the right to be protected. Unfortunately, the church has become the highest victim of these unprovoked attacks and security challenges. Kalu noted that "the state maintains law and order and security of life and property; on the other hand, the church which is the conscience of the nation, promotes the spiritual interests of the citizens "(Adetunmbi 2017). What Kanu posits here is that their roles compliment each other's role.

The roles which unfortunately both have failed in performing resulting to the activities of the church and state being seen as being at variance with each other. Yet, what affects the state naturally also affects the church one way or the other since both are creations of society. As in most communities and towns in Nigeria, "Churchmen are also Statesmen". The Church and other religious faiths have experienced security challenges in Nigeria, stressing the point that no one is immune to security crunch. It is against this backdrop that this paper discusses, 'The Church and Security via use of ICT in Ikwerreland'.

The following terms shall be clarified for proper understanding of the topic and they include: **Church, Security and ICT.** Furthermore, the paper will review the geo-political location of Ikwerreland, examine the security in Ikwerre, the Church's security experience in Ikwerre, and what needs to be done.

The Church

The word "Church" as used in the New Testament is derived from the Greek *ecclesia*. It has the same meaning with the Hebrew, *qahal* which means an "assembly" (Babalola -Jacobs & Babalola-Jacobs 2020). In the same vein, Johnson (2015) affirms that the church in New Testament is an assemblage of God's people, the Israelites. As Johnson (2015) further observed, the church as a universal faith, includes new generation of people who accept Jesus Christ as the Lord and Son of God.

The church as an assembly goes beyond the boundaries of Jews and Gentiles as it includes all who believe in Jesus. It is generally referred to as the gathering of Christian believers, who are organised in worship of God through Jesus Christ. Hence, it is the fellowship of the people of God as affirmed in 1 Peter 2:9. However, the interest of this paper is to investigate the church as a people of God in the face of current security challenges in Nigeria, and on how ICT could be used to avert and checkmate insecurity in the area.

Security

Security is a global phenomenon, which human race since history has often tried to defeat. Balogun (2003) averred that "man's primary and engaging concern has been that of survival and protection from the vagaries of nature, natural disasters and from the ill-intentions and misdeeds of his fellow men". As affirmed in section 14(b) of the Nigeria constitution (1999) "the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government". Security includes those activities involved in protecting a country, building or person against attack or danger. It could also be referred to as freedom from anger, fear or anxiety. Shinkaiye cited in Wekwa 2019, argues that "Security is the sum total of actions and measures, including legislative and operational procedures, adopted to ensure peace, stability and the general well being of a nation and its citizens". According to Katsina (2012) "Security is the state's capabilities to defend its territorial integrity from threats, actual and imagined, as well as acts of aggression from other potential enemies".

Wekwa (2019) observed that there are different dimensions of security such as personal security, communal security, political security, national security, religious security, information security among others. On information security, Okere at al (2019) said that it is the practice of defending information and information bearing materials from unauthorized access, use, disclosure, disruption, modification, perusal, inspection, recording or destruction; while Wekwa (2019) says of religious security as revolving around all actions and intents by man to preserve the sanctity of his relationship with his creator and this involves the processes and procedures for doing same without hindrances. The Church as a religious institution is not immune to the myriad of insecurity cases that has bedevilled human society in time perspective. It is against this backdrop that we examine security in the context of the Church as a human institution. The Church is a part and parcel of the society prone to danger, anxiety, and fear in time of insecurity. Speaking on security crisis in Nigeria, the retired Primate of Church of Nigeria, Anglican Communion, Nicholas Okoh cited in Enyindah (2011) said:

> That the spate of violence, attacks on life and property and mysterious unsolved high profile assassinations throughout the Country is of a particular concern to the Church. The security agencies comprising the

> army, the police, state security services, and immigration among others, need to be totally reformed and strengthened through the provision of the latest technology and equipment to be able to perform their constitutional task of protecting the citizens against internal and external aggression (p.12).

Church and security challenges In Ikwerre

Security of Churches in Nigeria, have been a recurring issue, and churches in the Ikwerre are not exempted. The church in the Ikwerre, whether Roman Catholic Church , Orthodox Church, Protestant Churches, African Independent Churches, Pentecostal Churches and Neo-Pentecostal Churches, had in one way or another experienced security crunch. According to Okoh, cited in Enyindah (2011) "... adequate security arrangements should be put in place as a matter of urgency in all the Churches of our communion to ensure the protection of lives and properties for the days are evil". This clarion call for proper security apparatus is penitent as churches in the Ikwerre locality are not exempted from the evil of insecurity that is facing the Nigeria nation.

Enyindah (2011) writing further on the security situation in Ikwerre Diocese, said: "agitated by the security issues and the number of killings that occurred in Rumuoro-Ogbakiri, Ibaa, Oduoha-Emohua, Ogbodo-Isiokpo, Aluu and other communities within our Diocese in the month of May and June 2016, we decided to call for special prayer session". This was confirmed by some informants who said that the killing by cult groups in many Ikwerre communities up till 2019 is a recurring incident. Communities like Obelle, Ibaa, Omagwa, Isiokpo, Elele, Emøhua, Omudioga, Egbeda, Ndele, Odegu, Ogbakiri among others live in fear of these cult groups. This has affected the Church, as many committed members of the churches in the Ikwerre have fled for their safety while those outside the rural areas hardly visit their home Church on the ground of insecurity.

In an effort to curb the security challenges in the church in Ikwerre, Bishop Enyindah initiated a lecture on security with the topic: "The role of the government and traditional rulers in checking the menace of insecurity of live and property in rural areas" during the 9th edition of the Cathedral annual lecture series held on June 11th, 2016 at St Peter's Cathedral Isiokpo. Bishop Enyindah also inaugurated a security outfit, which according to him, is a security agency for the Diocese to be known and called "Ikwerre Diocesan Security Agency" (IDSA). He said that the essence of the security outfit is to provide jobs for the teeming jobless youths in the Diocese, to help provide security assistance to the Diocese and some of the Churches, institutions and establishments in need of security services. This to a large extent brings to the fore place of security in the Church and society at large.

ICT

Information and Communication Technology goes with acronym ICT. It refers to technologies that provide access to information through telecommunication. It is associated to Information Technology (IT) but focuses primarily on communication technologies. This includes the internet, wireless networks, cell phones and other communication mediums (Ratheeswari: 2018). In the same vein, Asafe (2014) assert that ICT is often used as an extended synonym for information technology (IT), but is a more specific term that stresses the role of unified communications and the integration of telecommunications (telephone lines and wireless signals), computers as well as necessary enterprise software, middleware, storage, and audio-visual systems, which enable users to access, store, transmit, and manipulate information.

The term ICT is now also used to refer to the convergence of audio-visual and telephone networks with computer networks through a single cabling or link system. ICT covers many products that stores, retrieves, manipulates, transmits or receives information electronically in digital form. However, ICT has different definitions from various academic contexts. In addition, ICT is a channel through which communication is made, information circulated, data stored or retrieved. The church in Ikwerre could key-in to ICT aided security. Hence, the penitent use of ICT in curbing the security challenges in Ikwerre vis-a-vis Nigeria cannot be overemphasized.

Geo-political location of Ikwerre

The Ikwerre ethnicity constitutes one of the major ethnic groups which make up the present Rivers State of Nigeria as geo-political. According to Onu (2018), Ikwerre, is a sub-ethnic group in the Niger Delta geo-political zone of Nigeria, and constitutes a major ethnic group of Rivers State. Ikwerre people are found in four Local Government Areas in the Rivers State, Nigeria and they are: Ikwerre Local Government Area, Emohua Local Government Area, Obio/Akpor Local Government Area and Port Harcourt Local Government Area.

Ikwerre land plays host to multi-national companies, such as the International Airport, Omagwa, the Airport Hotel and other Hotels; the University of Port Harcourt (Choba and Aluu), Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rumuolumeni, St. John and Ndele Campuses and the Rivers State University, Oroworukwo are all domiciled in Ikwerre land. In general, Ikwerre is blessed with vast expanse of land for agricultural purposes and several streams and creeks for fishing (Wotogbe-Weneka, 2011). Wotogbe -Weneka (2011) argues that "this geographical condition places the Ikwerre in an advantaged position of benefiting from an amphibious environment". Suffice it to say that Ikwerre land supplies the entire Rivers State of Nigeria with major food stuffs like garri, plantain, and yam.

Ikwerre towns and villages within the saline waters such as Ogbakiri, Emohua and Rumuolumeni practice fishing as an occupation at the same level with their Ijaws neighbours.

Based on this perspective, Manda stressed that from time immemorial, about 400 BC, the main occupation of Ikwerre people have been farming, hunting, collection of palm fruits and fishing - for the coastal communities like Rebisi and other areas such as Ogbakiri, Isiokpo, Omagwa, Igwuruta, Omuanwa, Emohua etc. These communities have rivers for fishing as part of their occupations. Ikwerreland is blessed generally with both human and material resources. According to Wotogbe-Weneka (2011), all these (blessings) are addition to Port Harcourt being the seat of multinational oil and oil wells thus, qualifying Rivers State with the acronym "The Treasure Base of the Nation".

The religio-cultural life of Ikwerre people made them unique and outstanding among Rivers people. Ikwerre people are famously traditional religious inclined like other African communities. Despite the influence of foreign religion like Christianity and Islam, the indigenous Ikwerre religion seems to have survived, albeit with lesser vigour than in the past. Culturally, the wrestling (Egelege) matches and other numerous ritualistic festivals and festivities are part and parcel of the people's life. In fact, as Wotogbe-Weneka (2011) puts it, "life is full of enjoyment among the traditional Ikwerre".

The causes of insecurity in Ikwerre land:

- **Get rich quick mentality**

  The "get rich quick mentality" among the Ikwerre people – especially the youth - was not part of the ancient traditional Ikwerre society. Ikwerre people were contented with what they had before the era of land selling and oil boom in Nigeria. As it has been alleged, some Nigerians of Niger Delta origin with their counterparts in other parts of the country, engaged themselves legally and illegally in the oil business, in order to share in Nigeria's "National Cake." As Ngwube (2015) observed "Oil bunkering is effectively Nigeria's most profitable illegal private business in the petroleum industry. Illegal oil bunkering is therefore a euphemism for theft of oil".

  In the same vein, Wotogbe-Weneka (2011) affirmed that the illusory oil boom brought about by oil exploration and exploitations in their land have now driven people's quest for sudden riches to the zenith. Today what matters in the minds of most youths is how to make quick money. Ikwerre like most parts of the Niger Delta region, have grown in the mentality of get rich quick. And the aftermaths of this evil mentality are cultism, kidnapping for ransom, arm robbery, corruption,

among other criminalities, which have created insecurity in the area. The church as the conscience of the people is expected to rise up to the challenge by ensuring that the dangers of this mentality are brought to the fore and addressed. The most effective and fastest way of doing this is via the use of ICT.

- **Denigration of Traditional Values**

  Wotogbe-Weneka (2011) said that "moral decadence pervades the gamut of today's Ikwerre societies because societal customs, laws, taboos regulation of the land are breached flagrantly". As observed, indiscipline is now the bane of Ikwerre society vis-a-vis Nigeria as one would have blamed the insecurity in the Ikwerre land on Westernisations and Christianisation. As rightly observed, majority of Ikwerre people and foreigners living in the area, today claim to have embraced Christianity or the Islamic faith, but the penitent question is "how many of them are genuinely Christians or Muslims.?" (Wotogbe-Weneka: 2011).

  The un-genuine characters of majority of Christians and Muslims living in Ikwerre, affirmed to the fact that insecurity in today's Ikwerre land is not just caused by religious affiliation rather has been as a result of total flagrant of the religious ethos. The cause of insecurity in Ikwerre nay, Rivers State, reflects the security challenges in Nigeria. As Ibrahim et al (2020) rightly observed, It is a pity that most youth in Nigeria have mortgaged the culture of respect, love for human lives, hard work, friendliness and receptiveness to strangers in exchange of the Western culture and lifestyle. These have given rise to modern crime and social evil destroying the indigenous core value of Nigerians.

- **Unemployment**

  It has been obviously observed that unemployment is one key cause of insecurity around the world. As observed in Williams (2015) the rise in crime wave in Nigeria since the mid-1990's was as a result of unemployment, economic decline, and social inequality, which are abetted by inefficient and corrupt police among others variables. As we observed earlier, Ikwerre ethnicity is located in Rivers State, and the report of Nigeria's National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) on Rivers State, rank the State among the States with highest level of unemployed citizens in Nigeria.

  According to Nigeria's National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), (2019), "in Q3 2018, Akwa Ibom state reported the highest unemployment rate (37.7%), followed by Rivers State with (36.4%), Bayelsa state (32.6%), Abia (31.6%) and Borno state (31.4%)." Ogele (2020) asserts that "the top 5 states with the highest unemployed population are Rivers - 1,673,991, Akwa Ibom - 1,357,754, Kano - 1,257,130, Lagos

- 1,088,352 and Kaduna - 940,480". The unemployment position of Rivers State affirms to fact that, most indigenes and foreigners in Ikwerre are unemployed, as Ikwerre is the major hub of Rivers State. The resulted effect and aftermath is the high level of insecurity in the area.

- **Migration**
  As observed, there is a high level of migration from Northern Nigeria, mostly as a result of Boko Haram; Yoruba/ Igbo; and from other rural areas of Niger Delta to Ikwerre land as a result of desires for business and employment;. As Ogele (2020) observed, "From our findings, Port Harcourt City is a commercial hub in Nigeria. Hence, there is constant migration from rural areas to Port Harcourt urban in search of greener pasture or white-collar jobs." He further averred that as more people troop into Port Harcourt City, (Ikwerre land) in search of jobs, the more the mortality rates keep increasing and the jobs are declining based on the economic downturn. Of course, this scenario as observed has not only increased unemployment in the area but, it has increased insecurity to lives and properties in the Ikwerreland.

- **Leadership Failure**
  Increase rate of armed robbery, oil bunkering, kidnapping, cultism, among other crimes is a direct consequence of failure of leadership, not just in Ikwerre but in Rivers State and Nigeria at large. The mandate of every meaningful leader is to secure lives and prosperities and provide for the welfare of the people. Nigerian leaders - the presidency, the governors, the local government Chairmen, and Traditional Rulers have all failed in the above mandate as mentioned. In Ikwerre like other ethnicities in Nigeria has become the den of criminals (cultists, kidnappers) been exploited by politicians, local Chiefs and the so-called rich men in the area, who engage and arm them. Therein, the aftermath in the Ikwerre land as experienced in recent years was insecurity.

Security in the Ikwerre

Historically, before advent of Christianity and Westernisation with its modern security outfit, Ikwerre like other African communities had the way of securing their domains and areas. As observed, security was for all, the young and old, the dead and living, and land called Ali are custodians and agents of security. Recent activities of OSPAC in Ikwerre land in curbing the nuisance and menace of insecurity has been affluent by reasonable, rational and peace loving Nigerians. As observed, their achievements in East-West road axis of Ndele, Rumoji, Emohua area of Rivers State are visible and people now sleep with eyes closed. However, there are alleged brutality, extra judicial killings by some unscrupulous

OSPAC members in some communities in Ikwerreland, such as killing of Promise Ogbonna a native of Igwuruta; that of Mr. Chika Peters of Ibaa known as 'bishop' who was a repented cultist, a member of the hunters group - a security outfit in Ibaa, as reported on 31st December, 2020 and 1st January, 2021.

Mr. Azundah Prince Osorochi who hails from Elele in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers has narrated how he was allegedly tortured by OSPAC, a local vigilance outfit for several weeks he was in their detention over accusation of involvement in sundry crimes" (https://www.thenewsnigeria.com.ng/2020/07/22/how-i-was-tortured-paralyzed-by-ospac-ikwerre-lga-vigilance-group-welder/).

The Omagwa OSPAC members were alleged to have killed security personnel at Igwuruta Ali. The killing of three members of Omerelu OSPAC were allegedly carried out by the branch leader is evident of internal extra judicial killing of OSPAC groups in Ikwerre. As observed, the extra judicial killing, brutality and failure to obey rule of law by OSPAC in Ikwerre, is a manifestation of failed security architecture in Nigeria. The Police in Ikwerreland vis-a-vis Rivers State have been accused of brutality, abuses, bribery, and extra- judicial killing of innocent Nigerians. The alleged killing of a tricycle (keke napep) driver at Nkpogu Rebisi in December 2020 among others, support the allegation.

The security agencies in Ikwerre themselves have constituted insecurity in the area to a large extent. Whether as Police, Army or OSPAC, they are all after money which has affected thorough investigation of these crimes since the bribe they take seems to have blinded their eyes. As Adetunmbi (2017) rightly observed, "it has been alleged that some unscrupulous officers give firearms to criminals who use them to harass the public and engage in highway robberies. The Police are also alleged to be collecting unauthorised fees before granting bail to anyone who is arrested. Some Police in traffic control collect graduated illegal charges on all operators of inter -and intra –city roads and highways. They even take bribe openly most especially at checkpoints". This is not peculiar to the Police alone but also involves the Military, Road Safety, Civil Defence, Nigerian Customs, Nigeria Immigration Service, and Vehicle Inspection Officers who are all culpable.

The above character of Nigerian Security agencies, is now replicating in OSPAC and other local security outfits in Ikwerre. In Ikwerre vis-a-vis Rivers State, those whose responsibility it is to secure lives and properties are the ones involved now in collecting money at the slightest opportunity at checkpoints and Police stations from helpless citizens by threat and intimidation. As observed, the Nigeria Police and OSPAC in Ikwerre land now constitute themselves as judges who without thorough investigation, could condemn

and sentence citizens to death. The failure of the present security system in Ikwerre vis-a-vis Nigeria aroused the need for the use of ICT in the security architecture in Ikwerreland..

Church Security Experience via ICT in the Ikwerre

In recent years, "Safety First" has become a common cliché as threats to life and properties increase on daily basis in a wicked world" (Wobodo, 2020). The use of Closed Circuit Television (CCTV), Hackett metal detectors, Mobile security communication gadgets, electrical barb-wired fencing and well-trained security/bomb diffusing experts which have been extended to the Banks, Embassies, Government establishments and multi-national corporate offices could also be extended to the Churches. In this case, the Church is positioned to use information and communication technology to secure her members.

Although the Church believes in Divine security, they need not to undermine ICT security related solutions, because the Church is an agglomeration of politicians and artisans, the rich and the poor; hence, the need to have information and communication technology security in order to avert human error in case it arises. For instance, there are security rooms, with Panasonic security systems in the Vatican City, which oversee the Vatican City and its Museum (Wobodo: 2020). The Church in Nigeria today faces serious security challenges, which Ikwerre area is not an exemption.

Writing on the security issues, Haralambos and Holborn affirmed that:

> Islamic fundamentalism attracted more attention than other terrorist groups, particularly after the Islamic fundamentalist Al Qaeda's 9/11 attack of the USA; the train bombing in Madrid in 2004, the suicide bombing in London in July 2005; and the Boko Haram bombing of the United Nations embassy in Abuja, Nigeria 2011 (Emmanuel and Benjamin, 2011).

Olusola affirmed that "the security situation is worsened by the spate of bombings by the *Jama'atu Ahlis-Sunnah Lidda Awati Wal Jihad* otherwise called Boko Haram (western education is sinful in Hausa language) (PDF: 2014).There have been series of attacks on the Nigerian nation and the Church in particular. The need to stop this satanic menace of insecurity against the society and the Church prompted the recommendation that among other things security personnel should be adequately trained and equipped on the use of ICT; the National Identity Management Commission should create and maintain a national identity database management system, and there should be Nation-wide installation of CCTV camera to track criminal activities in the country (Wobodo, 2020). Against this backdrop the Churches that are lagging behind today should adopt information and

communication technology devices and applications in arresting security challenges that have already bedevilled them.

Speaking on the 'Issues of Security challenges in Diocese of Ikwerre Anglican Communion', Wosu (2018) believed that security belongs to God. According to him, security of people does not depend on any military might but, God knows how to save and protect His people on earth. He argues that ICT is a veritable tool to curb the menace of insecurity that has bedevilled the Diocese. Furthermore, he believes that ICT devices and applications like CCTV can be of help in checking insecurity as the case may be. In the same vein, Nheeme (2018) agreed to this when he said that ICT will help to reduce the insecurity problem in Ikwerre communities. In this era, the Church must take some serious measures to ensure security in their localities. He further observed that some Churches have started using CCTV monitor, but regretted that the Diocese has not yet keyed in to the platforms.

In contrast, some informants believe that ICT is already in use in Ikwerre but its impact has not yet been felt. They agreed that as the case arises, some members of the churches in the area do make mobile phone calls, use wassap and SMS alert to inform the public and call security agents for help when the need arises. The reality of security challenges among the Ikwerre was heightened when some Clergy and Laity of the church were kidnapped, others missed or killed. In fact, in a bid to tackle the security menace, Bishop Enyindah advised everyone to be security conscious and further directed that Church services and every programme must not last longer than necessary.

According to him (2019), Church members have been abducted and some not seen for years now. For instance, in this part of Rivers State (Ikwerre and Emohua Local Government Areas) members of the Church in the Diocese of Ikwerre, Sir John Onumaeme and Sir Bright Kpaliku were abducted since 2015 and 2018 respectively and have not been seen dead or alive till date.

He further observed that on Sunday 11th November, 2018 members of St John's Anglican Church, Apani Parish, Hon Samuel Nwanjoku and Hon Moses Ogu who returned home to participate in the Church harvest and Thanksgiving service, while returning to Port Harcourt after the service were abducted on their way. Hon Samuel Nwanjoku was found dead the next day. Sadly also on 7th April 2019, Mr. Foundation Onuekwa, a member of St Luke's Anglican Church, Emohua in the Diocese of Ikwerre was shot dead by cultists in his shop at the front of his house. However, even when these victims were not rescued from the hands of their abductors, information about their kidnapping or killing went viral

with the aid of information and communication technology platforms such as Facebook, Wassap, SMS, Radio and Television announcements.

Similarly, in 2014, Ven. Promise Igwe, a Clergy and the Vicar of St Luke's Anglican Church, Emohua, was abducted at the Vicarage by unknown gunmen but was later released. Prior to his release, ICT was used to disseminate the information to the Clergy who gathered at the Church, and subsequently matched round Emohua community in protest against the abduction of their colleague. On the 9th November 2014, Canon Smart Nwankwo was also abducted by unknown men and was taken to unknown place in Rivers State, but as God may have it, he escaped from his abductors. ICT was also used to disseminate the information of his kidnap and subsequent freedom. News of abduction involving Revd Solomon Foby, who on 27th September 2017 along Omunwa / Ubima Road while on his way back to St John Anglican Church, Apani broke out. The Church, the Clergy and the Laity were alerted with the aid of ICT to pray for his safe release. He was later released by his abductors.

Another Clergyman, Revd. Kenneth Didia was abducted with his wife on their way to Church service at Akpabu on 11th of November 2018. They were released as information went around the Diocese immediately through the aid of ICT. On 23rd October 2018, Mrs. Rejoice Wosu, (a clergy wife), and Mrs Joy Azunda, (a Diocesan clerk), were abducted on their way from Elele to the Diocesan office at Isiokpo. Through the use of ICT platforms, information of their abduction went viral. The Clergy and the Laity members of the Diocese of Ikwerre were asked to pray for their release. They were later released.

Regrettably some informants observed that ICT devices and applications have aided kidnappers to ask for money from the family of the victims. They observed that Information and Communication Technology (ICT) have also helped the kidnappers or cult boys to monitor the movement of their perceived victims. In contrast, other informants observed that Information and Communication Technology has been a veritable tool for the security agents in tracking criminals and kidnappers in the area.

Conclusion

In concluding this historical appraisal of the need to use the ICT in addressing security challenges bedevilling Ikwerre land in particular and Rivers State, Nigeria, the following suggestions and recommendations are here made:

* The church and people of Ikwerre should know that security is the business of everybody hence they should use their ICT devices and applications (mobile

phone, computer, radio, etc) to record and video events of insecurity as they occur, and send or report the same to the appropriate quarters.

* This work encourages the installation of ICT devices and applications at strategic positions in Ikwerre and indeed everywhere. The Ikwerre towns and villages should try and install CCTV cameras at strategic positions in order to compliment already existing security outfits.

* The church in the Ikwerre should install ICT devices and applications for the purpose of security in the local churches. The churches in Ikwerre land should endeavour to use and position ICT devices and applications at strategic locations of their church environments to monitor movement in and out of the church premises. In the case of security challenges, ICT would help to checkmate who comes in and who goes out thereby providing detailed information when the need arises.

* The security agents (the Nigeria Police and other Para-military outfits) in Ikwerre should undergo proper ICT security training. This will in turn help the agents to monitor and crackdown criminal elements in the area. With ICT, the public can easily reach them with vital information on security situation in their areas.

* There should be mobile security equipped with ICT applications that will patrol the length and breadth of Ikwerreland. Ikwerre, churches should collaborate with the local council and Rivers State government to buy security cars, equipped with modern ICT security applications. The cars should be stationed at strategic location of every town and village in Ikwerre, in order to forestall and curb security problems that have bedevilled some Ikwerre communities.

* The abuses and brutalities of innocent citizens by some security agents in the Ikwerre land would be condemned and adequate monitoring measures put in place to checkmate their operations.

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