## Amotekun and the Fight against Crime: The Role of Technology in Community Policing in Southwest Nigeria

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#### **Abstract**

This paper looks at two promising strategies to improve public safety in Nigeria: giving state governments more control over gun regulation and using modern technology to strengthen community policing. It focuses on the Amotekun Corps a regional security outfit in the Southwest as a practical example of how these ideas can work on the ground. The core argument is that when states are allowed to manage firearm policies under federal guidance, they can respond more effectively to local security issues like armed robbery and kidnapping. Amotekun's efforts show how technology such as data analytics, mobile communication tools, and surveillance systems can boost crime prevention and make operations more efficient. The paper proposes a hybrid model that blends innovation with localized governance. This approach could help build safer communities, increase public trust in law enforcement, and ensure greater accountability. Of course, there are risks like potential misuse of firearms or weak oversight but the study stresses the importance of strong regulations to keep things in check. In the end, it advocates for a security system that's flexible, tech-savvy, and tailored to the unique needs of each region one that can adapt to Nigeria's evolving safety challenges and offers a more stable future.

**Keywords**: Amotekun, Conditional Decentralization, Firearms, Governance of Technology Community, Policing

### Introduction

The establishment of autonomous security agencies, like Amotekun, has frequently resulted in conflicts over jurisdiction and authority, a situation where state or regional security services function independently of a centralised state. A crucial conundrum between the necessity of a local security response and the dangers of replacing national law enforcement is brought to light by the urge in Nigeria to arm Amotekun, which would prolong ongoing conflicts

within the general security system. There are now major legal and political concerns in Nigeria's security environment as a result of the Western Nigeria Security Network, also known as Amotekun, implementing new weapons. The government must sincerely assess its policies to ensure they are in compliance with the law in order to maintain public trust.

The federal Firearms Act of 1990 governs the usage of firearms within the Amotekun regime. The Act forbids anyone from using or possessing a firearm unless they have been expressly authorised to do so. Only the President or the Inspector General of Police may authorise the issuance of firearms. Therefore, there must be explicit and unambiguous consent for Amotekun to lawfully own and use sophisticated weaponry. It will be against federal law if this isn't done (Adetola, 2023).

Furthermore, the Nigeria Police Force is designated as the primary police force by Section 214 of the 1999 Constitution. An armed Amotekun would be perceived as intruding on police territory with such a designation (Olawale & Omotayo, 2022). Amotekun must make sure its members are licensed and well informed about their legal standing in order to maintain compliance with the law. The majority of armed organisations in southwest Nigeria have contemporary firearms that endanger the safety of civilians and underfunded law enforcement, raising concerns about criminal security (Adegbite, 2022).

The supporters of Amotekun believe that with them providing the unit with modern firearms, they will be in a position to retaliate against armed banditry and keep safe communities. With weapons, Amotekun would be in an ideal position to fight crimes such as armed robbery, organised crime, and kidnapping (Ibrahim, 2023). Nevertheless, officers can be unprotected and unprepared to address threats when they do not have the resources to do so (Ibrahim, 2023). The arming of Amotekun is therefore considered a necessary step towards the security of the Southwest people and property. The current security agencies, which were given a right to carry guns, are vulnerable to gun abuse even when their usage is a challenging issue. All the gun restriction programs should be followed by strict regulations and maximum accountability to minimize the chances of abuse. Civil society organisations advocate in the area of the acquisition and use of guns of complete reporting, audit by an independent body, and internal review (Adegbite, 2022).

To promote moral behaviour, Amotekun agents must undergo regular training on human rights, de-escalation strategies and use of force appropriately. To enhance professionalism and accountability in the way they handle the people, such training should be a routine in their daily schedule and not a onetime event. The decision to equip Amotekun with modern equipment has political implications. Others fear the threat of militarisation and potential misuse, whereas the majority of people consider militarisation a necessary measure to take in the fight against the criminals carrying heavy weaponry (Adedoyin & Nweke, 2023). These problems need to be overcome through open communication and active involvement of the community. The engagement norms can be clear, and the training demonstrations in the community and the transparency of procurement can all help reduce the mistrust and build the trust.

Meanwhile, Amotekun and other regional security organizations should be regulated on the use of advanced weapons at the federal level. This is especially important because Amotekun and federal or state security services should not have overlapping jurisdictions and should be effectively communicative (Bamigboye & Adeola, 2022). It is possible that the modern equipment will enhance deterrence and operational capabilities, but first, human rights should always be prioritized. The key priorities should always be to protect communities and reach peaceful resolutions to disputes. In order to avoid unnecessary use of force and increase the levels of public trust, training is supposed to be characterized by the strong emphasis on non-lethal methods, adherence to the law, and de-escalation (Ogunbiyi, 2023).

Governments should pay close attention to the political and legal barriers to arming Amotekun. To provide the operations of Amotekun with the legal framework, it might be necessary to consider federal law such as the Firearms Act and update it in accordance with the realities of organised crime in Southwest Nigeria. The success in this area requires accountability, transparency and effective coordination of security agencies. With the right training and supervision, Amotekun can be a responsible force in the war against crime, save lives, enforce the law and win the trust of the communities it serves.

## Methodology

To examine the role of conditional decentralisation and technology-based community policing in enhancing regional security in Nigeria, the research methodology undertaken is qualitative research. The primary topic is Amotekun, which is the regional security organisation and operates within the South-West. The study primarily relies on secondary sources, including government reports, academic publications, novels, and newspaper articles, to come up with an in-depth understanding. The sources enable the triangulation of data on diverse perspectives and offer intelligent background. Thematic analysis was employed to identify key trends and themes present in the information. The notions of institutional responsibility, confidence of the population, and the attentiveness to the needs of the local population, as well as the flexibility of the regional agencies, received particular attention. The research also compares and contrasts other regional security models of other nations that can further elaborate the analysis and give a wider perspective through which one can determine the strengths and weaknesses of Amotekun.

## Historical Firearms Law Analysis of Nigeria

Nigeria's gun laws began with the Firearms Ordinance in 1958 and were updated to the Firearms Act in 2004. Licenses to own, produce, or operate firearms must be granted by the President or the Inspector General of Police, according the legislation. It has stringent rules: children, people with mental illnesses, and anyone who have recently been found guilty of a violent crime are not eligible to obtain a licence. Furthermore, it stipulates that anyone found in possession of a firearm without authorisation faces a minimum ten-year jail sentence (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004).

The system is designed to give a single set of regulations to the whole country. In addition to keeping all areas under the same level of observation, it can help keep one particular area from having more firearms than another. However, in the majority of remote towns and locations where fighting occurs occasionally, the federal police are either present or not. People there run the risk of being attacked by insurgency combatants, bandits, and kidnapping groups. They are not always able to use a gun to defend themselves since the application process is either too slow or denied (GunPolicy.org, 2022).

Many communities are exposed and enraged by the inconsistency between the law and people's realities. Additionally, the law prohibits local security agencies from trying out novel ways to guarantee public safety. One such group established by Southwest governors to combat crime is Amotekun. Despite working on the front lines, the law forbids them from carrying firearms, even while they are facing off against armed criminals. The constitution forbids Amotekun from using firearms, according to Sunday Ehindero, a former top police official, who advised them to focus instead on obtaining intelligence (Gyamfi, 2020).

This limitation has rendered them less functional, raising the question of whether the legislation can keep pace with the dynamism of the security demands of Nigeria. It is a paradox that the people supposed to be the protectors have no means of doing it properly. It seems like an antiquated way of thinking from when Nigeria was a colony for the federal government to be the sole body that could issue firearms licenses. A one-size-fits-all approach is inappropriate and out of date because there are 36 states with diverse security concerns. We need to make the law more domestic, according to lawyers and security experts. Under strict federal oversight, they suggest giving each state a limited amount of authority to grant licenses. It is possible that this shift will speed up the process, increase system confidence, and create a security system that is available to everyone (Adeleye, 2025; Pulse Nigeria, 2020).

Amotekun uses little more than his bare hands to combat heavily armed outlaws in the Southwest. Nigeria has seen a rise in violent crime in recent years, mostly due to the availability of illegal weaponry for purchase and usage by several non-official groups. Even if traditional forms of violence still happen, more groups, such as criminal herders, are now using firearms like the AK-47. Since local security forces like Amotekun usually have limited resources and employ outdated equipment, this increase in weapons will make their job more difficult. However, those conflicts end in death when people have easy access to illicit firearms.

The employment of automatic weapons by herders who once relied on sticks makes conflicts over land or other resources far more dangerous and results in more fatalities. Amotekun was also founded to fight the rising crime rate in the Southwest, although they face armed robbers who have very few contemporary weaponry. The unfettered flow of illegal weapons sales has several negative effects on security. The more guns there are, the more lethal the fights become. A few injuries can now result in many deaths, decreasing community security and undermining the efforts of organisations like Amotekun. Armed parties now carry guns with confidence and commit severe crimes including drug sales and kidnapping.

The growth of illegal weapons is weakening local security organizations such as Amotekun and tearing communities apart. Increasing the violence, people are beginning to understand that their neighbourhood security teams cannot oppose the firepower of these armed gangs. Collaboration collapses when people lose trust in those hitched to protect them and that discovery encourages scepticism. Peace becomes even harder to achieve. One of the most pressing security challenges in Nigeria is the reduction of uncontrolled supply of illegal firearms, especially because it affects grassroots security agencies such as Amotekun. This issue requires an intensive and continuous effort; it is more than enforcement. It is imperative to tighten gun control laws, seal the borders of the country, and resolve economic problems that lead to crime. Otherwise, the gap between the well-armed criminals and poorly armed defenders of the community is likely to increase, and it will lead to the loss of the security and stability of the Southwest.

On the one hand, Nigeria needs to change its gun control legislation in a comprehensive and systematic fashion so as to give organisations such as Amotekun legal power. This includes the construction of popular opinion, the elimination of constitutional limitations, the establishment of checks and balances, and the modernization of obsolete legislation. The President and the Inspector General of Police are now the only parties that have power to issue firearms licenses under the Firearms Act of 1959. One of the measures that could be implemented to ensure a decentralisation issue is the amendment of this law to allow local police or state government to issue permits under federal observation (Elaigwu, 2005). This may involve establishment of weapons boards on state level that has the mandate of hiring, screening and maintaining records.

But any amendment to the Firearms Act must be passed by the National Assembly where the political interests often play a major part in the decision. This is more of a challenge by section 214 of the 1999 Constitution which forms a single national police force. Amotekun would require amendment of the Constitution to allow state/local police forces to also make Amotekun a legitimate law enforcement agency that has a right to bear arms (Ojukwu, 2016). This would have to be approved by at least 24 state legislatures and two-thirds of the National Assembly.

A National Firearms Oversight Commission could be created in order to safeguard the national security and allow local autonomy. Such an organisation would help regulate the use and licensing of firearms in the country which would help prevent the abuse and illegal access (Nwankwo, 2010). States are also able to use the legal system to be dominant by enacting regional security laws and challenging the Firearms Act in a court of law. Such action to the question of the constitutionality of state policing may be tested under section 14(2)(b) that emphasizes the obligation of the government to ensure the safety of the people (Aghemelo, 2018). A ruling in favour of decentralization of security responsibility might set a precedent. It is all about public pressure and political will as a basis of real change. Governors and federal legislators must demonstrate in earnest their willingness to reform, and they must be accountable to their citizens and compelled to act.

## Amotekun and Technology Integrated in Community Policing.

In Southwest Nigeria, community policing with technological assistance has the potential to greatly improve security and law enforcement. Amotekun, a local security organisation founded to help the current police solve security challenges, can benefit from a variety of technical solutions (Toogun, 2020). Decentralised gun control laws are crucial to local security, even while modern tools like cameras, drones, and communication are required to fight crime. According to Jimoh Ibrahim (2024), community policing is improved by technology that promotes collaboration and information sharing. Hassan (2025) asserts that websites allow users to report suspicious activities and request assistance, allowing law enforcement to respond promptly and offer immediate information. The most recent technologies, like data analysis and artificial intelligence (AI), are useful for identifying patterns, predicting crime, and allocating resources efficiently (Hassan, 2025).

In order to better prevent crime, police should focus their resources on high-crime areas by learning about past crimes (TechUK, 2024). Amotekun can plan patrol routes to cover more land and identify crime trends with AI techniques (The Hope Newspaper, 2025). Additionally, technology speeds up the entire legal system. Computer-based evidence, computer-based casework, and electronic records help to expedite investigations and produce more objective results (RAND, 2011). According to Future Policing (2024), we need to solve the concerns of tech policing, such as protecting citizens' privacy, striking a balance between technology and

human judgement, and providing police officers with the necessary training to use the tools (Soprasteria, 2024). Amotekun has access to a variety of contemporary technology tools created to solve the present security concerns in order to enhance its capacity to deter and intercept illegal activity. Large areas can be surveyed in the air by surveillance drones equipped with high-resolution cameras. These cameras improved response rates by enabling Amotekun to track and monitor crime in real time, especially in remote areas.

Responsibility is provided via body-worn cameras. When officers wear them while on patrol, they record interactions with people. By showing the police' behaviour, the film promotes civic faith and aids in investigations and trials. Patrol cars are outfitted with GPS units that track and plan on the movements of other vehicles. Command centres employ a strategic use of real-time intelligence to find information, analyse trends, and dispatch units. Suspects can be identified via face recognition technology. It speeds up arrests and cuts down on time spent on manual searches by matching faces against crime databases to help Amotekun find known criminals as quickly as possible. When authorities need body-quiet tools during a fight, pepper spray and stun guns are safer than firearms. They put police' and citizens' safety in perpetual jeopardy by refusing to apprehend suspects.

Mobile forensic technologies are essential for digital investigations. In order to assist with more extensive criminal investigations, these tools let authorities to retrieve information from phones and other devices and find important hints, including calls, messages, and location data. Effective communication is essential. Officers will be able to securely and in real time transmit sensitive information thanks to encrypted phones or applications, which will reduce mistakes or failures. The conventional method of threat detection can be changed by intelligent surveillance that blends AI with conventional CCTV. It automatically detects anomalous behaviour and entry points and sends out real-time alerts so that law enforcement can stop the situation.

All of these technical tools provide a strong foundation for modern policing, enabling Amotekun to secure Southwest communities more swiftly, openly, and securely. In conclusion, integrating AI and cutting-edge technology is just as important for efficient crime control in Southwest Nigeria as decentralising weapons governance is for improving security. Amotekun can more successfully address security issues by fusing the work of security services with contemporary instruments, resulting in communities that are safer and more secure (Oxford Centre, 2024). Amotekun employees will utilise these technologies responsibly and ethically if they receive the right training and follow the law.

## **Empowering Amotekun: Why Technology and Conditional Firearm Control Are Crucial** for Community Safety

Southwest Nigeria's regional security organisation, Amotekun, is changing the way law enforcement and local forces work together. However, two significant changes are required to effectively combat crime: a conditional transfer of firearm authority to state governments and the incorporation of contemporary technology into community police. Amotekun is currently constrained by antiquated equipment and restricted access to weapons. Since only federal authorities have the authority to grant weapons licenses, local teams are unable to adequately address threats such as kidnapping and armed robbery. Amotekun would be better able to

safeguard the communities they serve if states were permitted to issue handgun permits under federal supervision.

Decentralisation of this sort is not only sensible, but also essential. Different regions face different security challenges. Outfits like Amotekun would be able to respond quickly and forcefully when danger strikes if state governments were given the freedom to customise their reaction, including arming their local forces accordingly. The other important component is technology. Criminals are evolving, and so must our policing strategies. Amotekun can increase its effectiveness, transparency, and agility with the correct tools. Citizens can report suspicious activities quickly with the use of mobile apps and communication platforms, which will expedite response times and increase community involvement.

By identifying criminal trends with the aid of data analytics and artificial intelligence, Amotekun can focus resources where they are most needed. Real-time surveillance is made possible by drones and body-worn cameras, which also foster public trust by being transparent and accountable. It would be revolutionary to combine smart technology with firearm availability. It would provide Amotekun with the power and accuracy required to take on crime head-on. More significantly, it would re-establish faith in local security initiatives, which is essential for effective police. People are more inclined to cooperate, report crimes, and contribute to peacekeeping when they have faith in their guards. Amotekun is at a pivotal juncture. Conditional gun control and technology development are now essential, not just recommended. These adjustments have the potential to revolutionise community policing in Southwest Nigeria by increasing its effectiveness, responsiveness, and trustworthiness.

#### Conclusion

The research findings conclude that in specific regard, conditional decentralisation, or more so, which will provide regional governments with the mandate to regulate guns, as well as the prudent use of technology, has much to offer in improving community policing in Nigeria. Amotekun is a persuasive example of how digital innovation and a localised control may be used to create a more reliable and responsive security system. The ability of Amotekun to customise firearm laws to suit the specific security requirements of each locality and the implementation of technologies such as surveillance systems, instant messaging, and predictive analytics will enable it to deter crime more effectively and have a more positive engagement with the community in which it operates. Such developments do not only enhance efficiency in the operations, but also enhance accountability and regain the confidence of the people. The article however has sounded a warning these gains will backfire otherwise without sound legal systems, open supervision practices and other ethical provisions. Some of the risks such as power abuse, privacy invasion, and intergovernmental tension must be effectively managed. Despite the evident potential benefits, it should be carefully implemented and constantly evaluated.

### Recommendations

The following suggestions are put forth to guarantee the model's integrity and long-term success:

i. Clear legal standards that specify the extent of local weapon regulation and the jurisdiction of regional security organisations such as Amotekun must be

- established immediately. This will encourage uniformity among states and help prevent jurisdictional misunderstandings.
- ii. The use of data collecting, predictive policing technologies, and surveillance techniques must be governed by ethical principles. To guarantee that staff members are prepared to use these tools efficiently and sensibly, training programs must to be implemented.
- iii. The main concern should be frequent contact with the communities which Amotekun is working with. Development of trust and ensuring that security plans consider local issues and values can be done by utilizing town hall meetings, feedback processes and collaborative projects.
- iv. There is need to establish independent oversight organisations to monitor the operations of Amotekun, audit its resource utilisation efforts, and investigate its complaints. In order to maintain the confidence of the masses, the implementation and purchase of technology should be transparent.
- v. it is significant to document and share the experiences of Amotekun, good and bad to help shape up such projects elsewhere. The national security system will become more integrated and efficient through the encouragement of collaboration between the states.

The strategy can be used in restructuring the security situation in the country with the help of sound institutions, ethical leadership and non-discriminatory behaviours.

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