

LEAD DEBATE ON

A BILL FOR

THE NIGERIA POLICE ACADEMY (ESTABLISHMENT, ETC) ACT, 2019 TO PROVIDE FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NIGERIA POLICE ACADEMY AS A DEGREE AWARDING INSTITUTION AND FOR RELATED MATTERS.

Sponsor: Senator Halliru D. Jika

Mr. President, distinguished colleagues, I thank you for the privilege to lead the debate on the general principles of this all important Bill, for an Act to provide for the establishment of the Nigeria Police Academy as a degree awarding institution and for related matters. This Bill was read for the First Time in this hallowed Chamber on Wednesday, 20th November, 2019.

Mr. President, this Bill seeks primarily to provide for the legal framework for the Nigeria Police Academy which officially took off in 1988, simultaneously at two temporary campuses, namely: the Police Training School, Challawa, Kano, where cadet Inspectors were trained; and the Police College, Kaduna, where cadet ASPs, were trained.

These two campuses were merged and the Academy relocated to its permanent site in Wudil, Kano, after its formal Commissioning on the 2nd April, 1996, by then Head of State and Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces, General Sani Abacha, GCON, dss, mni, with the expectation that the Academy will be affiliated to a University for degree awarding courses.

In the year 2012, Mr. President, distinguished colleagues, the Federal Government of Nigeria upgraded the Nigeria Police Academy Wudil-Kano State, to a degree - awarding institution and the National

Universities Commission, accordingly, recognized the Academy as the thirty seventh (37th) Federal University and the one hundred and twenty-fourth (124th) University in Nigeria. So far, the Nigeria Police Academy has trained 2,848 Cadet ASPs and 2,374 Cadet Inspectors, making a total of 5,222 Cadet Officers that have passed out from the Academic. Some of these Officers were in fact, from the neighboring West African Countries, like Liberia and Sierra Leone.

Mr. President and distinguished colleagues, in spite the foregoing, this foremost sub-regional Police Training Institution, is yet to be backed up by any law. As such, certificates and degrees awarded by the Academy, risk non-recognition both nationally and internationally in the continued absence of an enabling legal framework to back the operations of the Academy.

It is the recognition of the inappropriateness of the absence of a legal framework for the Nigeria Police Academy and the urgent need to re-position and enhance police effectiveness through proper training as a means of fighting the seemingly intractable challenge of insecurity in our country that has necessitated the proposed enactment of a new law to strengthen the Nigeria Police Academy, in consonance with the dictates of international best practices.

Mr. President and distinguished colleagues, to say our country, Nigeria needs an institution capable of producing qualitative, skilled and intelligent officers able to meet the manpower needs of its Police Force, is an under-statement. The present security challenges in many parts of our country and the complexities of modern policing make it imperative that Nigeria continues to have a stream of middle level officers equipped with competences, backed by sound academic background, high professional and moral standards into

its Police Force, for effective law enforcement and selfless service to the Nation.

Generally speaking, Mr. President and my dear colleagues, the specific duties of a police officer are numerous and diverse. Sworn to protect and serve the communities in which they live and work; police officers enforce laws, obtain warrants, arrest and interview suspects; secure crime and accident scenes, write detailed reports and testify in court, among other duties. Police officers often have to respond to emergency calls, work shifts that operate around the clock and therefore need to know tactics and procedures for working under dangerous conditions. Hence, training and re-training of police officers cannot be over-emphasized and the need to have this Bill passed into law.

Part one of the new Bill, accordingly, captures, among others the objects of the Academy which includes; the encouragement of advancement in learning and availing the cadets of the Nigeria Police Force, without distinction of race, creed, sex or political affiliation, the opportunity of acquiring a higher and liberal education.

Furthermore, in the light of the general concerns about adherence to human right norms by the police and repeated alleged and proven cases of police brutality and sundry high handedness, including what is known in Nigeria as 'accidental discharge' by officers of the Nigeria Police Force, it is gratifying to note that another core objective of this Police Academy Bill, is to nurture, equip and produce globally competitive police officers with requisite knowledge, skills and attitudes suitable for leadership, scholarship, policing and community service.

Mr. President, distinguished colleagues, following the loud ovation that greeted the recent National

Assembly' s passage of the Police Trust Bill and its subsequent assent by His Excellency Muhammada Buhari, President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federation, by Nigerians, it has become clear that, without a concomitant passage of two Bills presently before this Senate, namely; the Nigeria Police Force Bill and this new Bill on the Nigeria Police Academy; the laudable expectations of the just enacted Police Trust Fund Act, as important as it is, may not achieve the level of effectiveness and outcome desired.

In all, Mr. President, distinguished colleagues, the Bill for an Act to provide for the establishment of the Nigeria Police Academy as a degree awarding institution and for related matters, deserves an urgent attention as it seeks to counter the existing training and capacity gaps that has characterized and limited the performance of the Nigeria Police Force for too long and heightening insecurity, across Nigeria.

I sincerely thank you for listening to me and for your anticipated support.