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THE IMPACT OF THE NIGERIAN POLICE FORCE ON CRIME CONTROL IN CROSS RIVER STATE

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Abstract
The dynamism and complexities of interaction amongst the people in a society gives room for crime. Since independence, Nigeria has been experiencing new set of crime problem in diverse areas of human endeavours, including petty theft, burglary, assault, fraud, armed robbery, kidnapping and terrorism, resulting in threat to security of lives and property. The Nigerian Police was established, amongst other security agencies, to control crime in the country. This paper assessed the impact of the Force on crime control in Cross River State. Finding from the study, which was premised on secondary data confirmed that the Force has recorded moderate achievements in combating crime in the state through efficient intelligence policing, credible beat and patrol system, constant raid of criminal hideouts, crime mapping and inter-agency collaboration, amongst others. In spite of its relative success, the Nigeria Police Force is facing many challenges in its task of combating crime in Cross River State. These challenges include underfunding, inadequate office and residential accommodation, insufficient arms and ammunition, obsolete patrol vehicles, poor communication equipment, shortage of personnel, lack of modern crime fighting equipment, poor welfare packages and corruption amongst its work force. The challenges enumerated above should be addressed. Community policing should also be rejuvenated with better coordination and financial support for effective collaborative policing in order to curtail crime in Cross River State and Nigeria.

Keywords: *police, crime, response, force.*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Since Adam and Eve committed the first crime of disobeying God, by eating certain forbidden fruit, crime has continued to manifest in the society (Akano, 1993).It is evident from the preceding historical snippet that criminality is part and parcel of human existence and no society is completely free from crime. As society expands, human interactions within such society also boom. The dynamism of human survival and complexities of interaction amongst the people give room for crime. As noted by Grabosky (1998), crime is an ineradicable birthmark of humanity. Crime is thus a constant variable in the community which every person may, under certain conditions, be drawn into. Since her independence as a nation, Nigeria has been witnessing what is described in crime literature as Crime Problem. This is a term that is used for protracted crime rate, when incidences of crime passes from feeble levels,

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escending to high intensity and ultimately, to a protracted level that certainly overwhelms the capacity of the state security apparatus to contain (Zems, 2013). The frequent incidences of assassination, armed robbery, forgery, kidnapping, corruption in private and official environments and even petty fraud by artisans only serve to confirm high incidences of crime in Nigeria. Other emerging crimes in Nigeria are Cybercrimes, Cyber Espionage and Cyber Terrorism.

Within its geo-political configuration, incidences of crime related activities in Nigeria are on the increase and very protracted to curtail. Two utmost threat to national security in the Northern parts of Nigeria are the Boko-Haram insurgency in the North – East and frequent herders -farmers conflict in the North- West and North Central, resulting in the destruction of lives and property; There is violent secessionist activities in the South- East, and , kidnapping, armed robbery, and rape in the South-West. In the South - South of the country, of which Cross River State is part, the crime profile includes militancy and incessant kidnapping in the Niger Delta area, terrorism and oil pipe vandalism. Since the enthronement of civilian rule in 1999, crime rate in Nigeria has been increasing, culminating in the lost of over 41,000 lives with over 20,000 deaths from the Boko-Haram insurgency alone (Leha, 2015). There were over 1,000 incidences of armed robbery, over 2000 cases of burglary incidences, and over 7000 cases of reported cases of public and private fraud between 2010 and 2015 (Leha, 2015:3).

There is an allegation of criminal diversion of public fund of $2.1 billion meant to buy arms to confront the Boko-Haram insurgency against Sambo Dasuki, ex-National Security Adviser. In fact, the statistics of crime rate in Nigeria given above are not comprehensive, as many of such crimes are rarely reported to the police. Apart from domestic crime commission, Nigeria has also been on the global crime map, especially since 1980s when economic recession started (Samuel, 2014).These crimes include smuggling across the national boundaries, human and drug trafficking, trafficking in small and light arms, international prostitution and terrorism, amongst others.

Acts of criminality in Nigeria has overwhelming negative consequences for the populace, including loss of lives and property. Apart from leading to human and economic losses, act of criminality equally constitutes direct threat to the legitimacy of government and leadership who are sometimes temporarily replaced with an emergency government, for their inability to curtail crime in their states. This scenario was recorded in Plateau state in 2002, when a state of emergency was declared owing to devastating communal conflicts (Celestine , 2015). As a nation that is highly prone to frequent crime, counter crime measures have drained huge resources from the Nigeria government, instead of being spent on developmental projects.

The Nigeria Police as a sub-system of the criminal justice system is empowered to apprehend and arrest people who commit crime. Specifically, the central thrust of Police responsibility towards the society is to prevent, control and

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combat criminality. This constitutional provision put the Police to task in curtailing the general breakdown of law and order as contained in Section 4 of the Police Act CAP 154 LFN 2004). In order to achieve the above constitutional mandate, the Nigeria Police has put in place various measures to curtail criminal acts in Nigeria (Police Operational Guideline, 2015). These security measures include: Beats and Patrol; Border patrol; Static guard; Surveillance; Intelligence gathering; stop and search operation; special escort, amongst others. This paper assesses the extent to which the above measures have influenced positively on crime control in Cross River State. The paper specifically examines the typologies and causes of crime in Cross River State, assesses the impact of the counter - crime strategies of the Nigeria Police Force in Cross River State and suggests how the police could improve its counter crime strategies in the state. The paper relies on secondary data, which is primarily deduced from relevant textbooks, police reports, bulleting, and interview with police officers in Cross River State, amongst others.

1.1 Definition of Concepts

1.1.1 Police: This is a person whose duty is to keep order and arrest people who break the law. It is also the department of a government that keeps order and arrest criminals.

1.1.2 Nigeria Police Force: A police force created by Section 214 (1) of the Nigerian Constitution , as amended in 1999, and given the statutory responsibility of detecting and preventing crime and apprehending offenders.

1.1.3 Crime: an act committed or omitted, in violation of either a public law, by forbidden or commanding it. .

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

There is no consensus agreement amongst security scholars on what constitute crime. What is considered as crime is dependent on different variable including the time, culture and context of committing such a crime within the society ((Grabosky 1998:28). Hence, without a unified agreement on what constitute crime, it is difficult to give a general description of criminal act. The description of crime also depend on the interpretation model of analysis; whether normative or legalistic (Howard and Whiteman, 2003). The normative model sees crime as a defiant behavior that violates prevailing norms. While the cultural standards prescribe how human beings ought to think and behave, the normative perspective considers the complex realities surrounding the concept of crime, and seeks to understand how the changing dimensions of the social, political, psychological and economic conditions influence crime.

Within a strict legal description however, crime is a violation of criminal laws, which attracts a legally sanctioned punishment. Crime is thus, an intentional violation of the criminal code without an excuse or defense, which is punishable as felony or

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misdemeanor once legally proved as having been committed against the State. Crime in law consists of two basic elements (Howard and Whiteman (2003): the *actusreus* and *mensrea*. The "actusreus" is the physical element or a guilty act that requires proof. The "mensrea" is the intention to commit crime, which must be proved beyond reasonable doubt. Where any of these two elements are absent, there cannot be crime legally. Dambazau (2007) broadly separates crime into different categories, one of which is violent crimes.

This category of criminality could be perpetrated against individuals, through physical force or intimidation. Violent crime can occur in domestic situations, may erupt during robberies, and sometimes involves the use of weapons. Violent crime could also result in sexual assault or homicide. Assaults make up the majority of recorded cases of violent crimes in Nigeria. The community is affected by violent crime dearly as reflected in the destruction of lives and property. There is Property crime, which relates to damages to property, including destruction of homes, businesses and land as well as theft of vehicles and household burglary. There are many preventive measures people take for protection of their property like the use of burglary proof at homes, security locks and alarms to tackle car theft, amongst others.

Economic crime is described widely; from shoplifting and theft to identity fraud, scams, advance fee fraud and money laundering. Economic crime is more commonly committed against businesses than individual households. An environmental crime can either be a deliberate or careless act that harms the environment. It might border on illegal fishing, logging and trading in timber, polluting or illegally trading in wildlife. The transnational crime places a significant burden on international economies and communities each year in terms of lost revenue and costs to criminal justice, social, health and welfare systems. This form of crime is perpetrated across national borders and could include corruption, trafficking in drugs or persons, and money laundering. There is the cyber crime, which borders on the widespread use of the internet for criminal activities, including fraud, hacking, money laundering and theft, through to cyber-stalking, cyber-bullying, identity theft, child sexual exploitation and cyber-terrorism.

Kayode (2011) identified the causes of crime in the society to include drug abuse and excessive alcohol intake. Drug overdose often affect all areas of the user's life and may lead to health complications or even death. The most widely used crime induced drug in Nigeria according to the author is alcohol, which is responsible for some of the serious car crash on the Nigeria roads, as well as being the factor responsible for three-quarters of assaults. Illicit drugs such as marijuana, cocaine, heroin also cause serious problems for harden users in the society. Crime negatively affects overall societal well-being in ways that go beyond the residents of the community in which the crime occurs as it undermines the social fabric of the community (Sampson, 2002). While the immediate effect of crime is usually felt by the individual upon whom the crime was committed, the community at large is also affected by criminal activity because high crime rates has been associated to lead to

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population reduction as able individuals move away to avoid victimization by the criminals (David,2008). David's position was contradicted by Alex (2010) by positing that crime neither spurs mobility nor necessarily decreases local involvement as other intervening factors such as efficient state protection comes to play.

Herman and Waul (2004) argued that crime elevates the rate of fear of the people and generally alienates them from optimal participation in community development as their studies found that many potential political aspirants have abandoned their political ambition owing to the destructive activities of political thugs who perpetrates different forms of criminality within the political space. Additionally, high crime rates create a negative impression of "crime community" to those who live outside such community and businesses tend to leave high crime areas (David, 2008:6). The identification of a particular community as being crime pronged has force many people outside such community to do their shopping elsewhere.. This invariably leads to low productivity from the communities affected by perennial incidences of crime leading to retrenchment of workers, which causes more crime (Sampson and Raudenbush, 2001). What has been distilled from the above review is that there is nexus between crime and the structural composition of the society.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

This work adopts the theory of motivation for optimal performance to explain the operational variation in the performance of the Nigeria Police Force within the domestic and international environments. Motivation is a psychological concept which relates to the strength and direction of behaviors when it is stimulated positively or negatively (Bolanle, 2005). Thus, People who are highly motivated to achieve certain objectives by being optimally equipped with working materials tend to work harder to achieve such objectives. A less motivated person who is denied the basic equipment to succeed will display less enthusiasm towards achieving the targeted objective of the organization. Many writers have propounded theories on what motivate people at work. The Scientific Management theory of motivation was propounded by J.G. March and A. Simon who tried to show that there are sound principles of optimal performance in an organization. The scholars drew some of their inspirations from the writings on industrial management of Fredrick Taylor in advanced society in a philosophy that viewed administration as a technical problem which basically concerned itself with divisions of labor and specialization of functions. The theory assumes that employees are primarily passive instrument capable of performing work and accepting directives based on the extent of their motivation.

In summary, the motivation theory assumed that to perform their duties optimally, workers need sustained financial reward, job satisfaction, close control and leadership training, amongst others. The theory of motivation for optimal performance is central to this study because the entire motivational variables above affect the

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performance of the Nigeria Police Force positively or negatively within domestic and international environments.

2.2 Conceptual Issues

2.2.1 The Nigeria Police and Crime Control in Cross River State

Cross River State is in the South-South geo-political zone of Nigeria bordering Cameroon to the East, Benue State to the North, Ebonyi and Abia States to the West and Akwa Ibom and Atlantic Ocean to the South (Atlas Map of Nigeria, 2011). The State was created on May 27 1967, with the capital in Calabar. It has a total land mass of 20.156 $km^2$and a population of 3,337,517 people with a population density of 170km (David, 2013). Cross River State consists of 18 Local Government Areas with Efik, Ejagham and Bekwara as the major languages spoken in the State. In accordance with section 215(2) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the Nigeria Police Force is organized into five levels of commands namely; Force Headquarters Command, Zonal Command, State Commands, Area Commands and Police Divisions. The Force Headquarters is headed by the Inspector General of Police. The Cross River State Police Command was created with the creation of Cross River State in 1967. The administration of the force in the State Command is segmented into seven departments, which is a replica of the Force' structure at the Headquarters , with each department being assigned specific functions. The seven departments are Finance and Administration, which coordinates the general administration of the State Command. The operation department controls the general activities of Guard and Patrol department. The Training department trains the personnel of the State Command; There is the Logistics and Supply department, which handles the general supply of equipment and materials needed by the personnel of the State Command. The Investigation and Intelligence department handles intelligence gathering and dissemination, the investigation of crimes and the prosecution of offenders. The command equally has a Research and Planning department, which assesses the impact of policing on the state, and strategizes for optimal performance for the force in the state. The Information and Communication Technology department handles signal to the outreach stations and in-house communication. Cross River State Police Command has a Commissioner of Police as the head, assisted by a Deputy Commissioner of Police while all the Departments, are the Logistics and Supply, Research and Planning and ICT, are headed by Assistant Commissioners of Police respectively. The Command has three (3) Area Commands, Twenty-Six (26) Police Divisions, and Fifty (50) Police Stations, and a Police Marine base (Police Report, 2015).

2.2.2 Typology and Causes of Crime in Cross River State

Just like any other part of Nigeria, crimes in Cross River State can broadly be categorized as anomic, extortive, grievance-expression crimes. (AbdulSalam, 2015). Anomic crimes often take place to avenge previous crime as recorded in many inter - ethnic clashes in the state. Extortive crime is designed as an organized violence to

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extort money from the victim's employers, relatives or government, especially through kidnapping. In Cross River State, criminal gangs do not only focus on prominent and wealthy individuals, they also focus on other citizens who are from very rich backgrounds, including teenagers, children, students, parents and grandparents. Thus, kidnapping has become a relatively new criminal habit in Cross Rivers. Grievance- expressive crime, especially, those that are perpetrated through kidnapping and oil pipe destruction are being used as an instrument for expression of grievance for perceived environmental neglect in Cross Rivers state, with a view to obtaining favorable concessions, especially from the Multinational Corporation.

There are many factors responsible for kidnapping in Cross River state. These include political marginalization of certain segments of the society; socio-economic neglect and gross deprivation, among others. As a result of this utter neglect and deprivation, there is widespread poverty, virtual lack of social and economic infrastructure and lack of basic utilities. There is high rate of youth unemployment, thus leading to crime. This state of affairs has in turn bred a frustrated population, ethnic polarization, communal suspicion, anti-establishment agitation and hostilities, all of which have enthroned violent crimes and impeded development in Cross River State (AbdulSalam, 2015). The adoption of draconian and unjust laws in the Nigeria's Statute has increase crime in Cross River State. Such unjust laws include the Land Use decree of 1978, the Petroleum decree of 1969 (as amended), Land title Vesting Decree 1993, National Inland Waterways Authority Decree 1997 and the Mineral Act, amongst other. These laws have deprived many indigenes of Cross River State their inalienable rights to the land and its resources for group and personal development aspiration. Because of this denial, the people have not only been impoverished but have virtually been left without the requisite economic empowerment, leading many people to take to crime. Acts of criminality in Cross River State is aided by waters surrounding the State Capital; Calabar, which facilitates movement on waterways and easy escape of criminals into the sea after the commission of crimes. Related to the facilitators of crime in the state are the creeks, which serves as criminal hideouts because of difficult terrain accessibility. In spite of the above operational challenges, the Nigeria Police in Cross River State Command has been making concerted efforts to curtail crime in the state.

2.2.3 The Police and Counter Crime Control Strategies in Cross River State

The Nigeria police have continued to counter crime in Cross River State through different crime management strategies, one of which revolves around proactive Policing. These tactical strategies borders on intelligence-led operation to gather information on criminal hideout to ensure criminal activities are nipped in the bud before they occurred. The police also enthrone an efficient Beat and Patrol Systems to ensure that key and vulnerable persons and places are properly guarded and patrolled. Major Highways and the Waterways in Cross Rivers State are secured by police visibility patrol teams, using Safer Highway patrol vehicles and the police

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marine. There is also the constant raid of criminal hideouts and mounting surveillance on known criminal elements to monitor their criminal intentions.

The Nigerian police in Cross River State also secures the state through Crime Mapping, Hotspot Patrols and Criminal Data-basing which involves collation of criminal statistics on crime trend, identification and study of modus operandi of identified criminals, causes and dynamics of crime, amongst others, with a view to curtailing criminal activities. There is the reactive (Crime control) Strategies by the police in Cross River State. This strategy include investigating reported cases of crime and criminality, arresting suspected persons and alleged criminal elements and prosecuting those found culpable of the offences committed with consequent acquittal, committal to prisons or payment of fines. The Nigeria Police in Cross Rivers collaborates with other security agencies such as the military, the Department of State Services, the Nigerian Security and Civil Defense Corps, Nigerian Customs, Nigerian Immigration Service, Nigerian Prison Service, National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, to curtail crime. The state command also has a Community Policing Strategy, which entails the participation and partnership with the communities in determining their policing priorities on how they want to be protected for optimal result. This measure has improved police interaction with the communities and increased security collaboration between the Federal, State and the Local Government, and between government and Youth Associations, Student Unions: Traditional Leadership, Religious Leaders, and organized Neighborhood Watch, to mention just a few , to prevent crime in Cross River State.

The above policing strategies, amongst others, have resulted in the following achievements by the police in Cross River State as tabulated in the Annexure below. Attached as Appendix 'A' is the reported crime statistics of the Command between January - December 2015, and Appendix 'B' is the Achievements of the command between January and December 2015.

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APPENDIX 'A'

YEARLY CRIME INDEX OF CROSS RIVER STATE COMMAND, CALABAR -2015.

S/N	CATEGORIES OF CRIME	NUMBER OF CASES REPORTED
1	KIDNAPPING/ABDUCTION	27
2	CULT ACTIVITIES	7
3	ARMED ROBBERY ARREST	30
4	ATTEMPTED ARMED ROBBERY	2
5	FOILED/ATTEMPTING KIDNAPPING	1
6	RAPE/DEFILEMENT	1
7	ACCIDENT/DISASTER	6
8	BREAKING/STEALING	3
9	CHILD THEFT	1
10	PROTEST/DEMONSTRATION	14
11	STRIKE/ UNION ACTIVITIES	8
12	UNLAWFUL POSE OF ARMS	10
13	S.U.D	3
14	ARSON	0
15	SUICIDE	5
16	FIRE INCIDENT	5
17	STUDENTS ACTIVITIES	1
18	YOUTH RESTIVENESS/ACTIVITIES	6
19	BOUNDARY/ LAND DISPUTE	4
20	COMMUNAL CLASHES	5
21	MISSING PERSON	2
22	MILLITANT/ SEA PIRACY	9
23	ETHNIC MILITIA	1

Source: 2015 Yearly Returns on Situational Crime Security Analysis - 2015

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APPENDIX 'B'

YEAR 2015: SUMMARY OF ACHIEVEMENTS/ RECOVERIES/ARRESTS IN CROSS RIVER STATE POLICE COMMAND, 2015

S/N	ACTIVITIES	NUMBER
1	SUSPECTS ARRESTED	97
2	ARMED ROBBERY ARRESTS	30
3	MURDER ARRESTS	46
4	ATTEMPTED MURDER ARREST	6
5	POLITICAL ACTIVITIES RELATED ARREST	13
6	RELIGIOUS RELATED ACTIVITIES ARREST	2
7	STOLEN/SNATCHED VEHICLES RECOVERED	11
8	MOTORCYCLES RECOVERED	0
9	ARMS RECOVERED	19
10	AMMUNITION RECOVERED	42
11	CARTRIDGES RECOVERED	8
12	KIDNAPPED VICTIMS RESCUED	10
13	STOLEN CHILDREN RECOVERED	2
14	ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS ARRESTED	541
15	CIVILIANS INJURED	18
16	POLICE ARRESTED	1
17	POLICE KILLED	6
18	POLICE INJURED	11
19	ATTACK ON POLICE STATION TEAM	2

Source: ZIIB 6 Yearly Returns on Situational/Crime/Security Analysis - 2015

2.2.4 The Challenges of Combating Crime in Cross River State by the Police

In spite of its relative achievements at curtailing crime in Cross River State, the State command still faces some challenges, making its achievements minimal. Some of these challenges are self- inflicted (attitudinal) and others external. The first major challenge to effective policing in Cross River State is the lack of public trust and confidence in the ability of the police to combat crime. According to Johnson, 2013), the Nigerian public is yet to develop trust and confidence in the police ability to contain crime. A genial relationship between the police and civil society in Nigeria is virtually non-existent. The Nigeria police receive negative perceptions and feeble cooperation from the public. Though crime prevention and control is a collective responsibility of all the citizenry, the police hardly get this vital cooperation as vast majority of residents in Cross Rivers see police officers more as an enemy than friend. Many citizens thus refrain from giving valuable information that could aid the police to contain crime in the state. This lack of public trust and confidence is brought upon the force by the attitude of some police officers in the discharge of [illegible] responsibilities and inadequate training. These attitudes include lack of dedication to duty; display of incompetence in handling crime situations, inadequate skills in handling specialized investigations, commission of investigative fraud by the police, leading to destruction of vital evidences, culminating in miscarriage of justice.

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Among the external challenges confronting the Nigerian police in Cross River Command is the underfunding of the Force by the Federal Government. The Nigeria Police has the largest workforce as a single organization in Nigeria. The personnel strength is estimated at about three hundred and fifty – five thousand (355,000) Officers and men spread across the nooks and cranny of Nigeria. Nigerian budgetary appropriation is usually very weak, with just 17 percent budgetary allocation to the police in 2014. An analysis of police budget between 1999 – 2007 showed that virtually same amount year in year out were allocated to the Nigeria Police Force despite the yearly fifty thousand police recruitment record (MPA, 2008, Celestine, 2015). The operational terrain of the Nigerian police in Cross River constitutes a big challenge because it has thick forest and land lock in nature. These negative environmental terrain features make it difficult for the police to penetrate the remote corners of the states where most criminals hide.

3.0 CONCLUSION

This paper assessed the response of the Nigeria Police to Crime Management in Cross River State. Finding from the study confirmed that the Force has recorded a moderate achievements of combating crime in the state through efficient intelligence policing, credible beat and patrol system, constant raid of criminal hideout, crime mapping and inter agency collaboration, amongst others. In spite of these relative achievements, the Force is facing many challenges in its task of combating crime in the state. These challenges include hostile attitude of Police Officers and men to the public, and vice-versa in the discharge of policing responsibilities, Underfunding, and difficult operational terrain.

To ensure optimal performance of the Nigeria Police Force, the challenges enumerated above should be addressed. Possible panacea to achieving the vision of Nigerians for more effective policing revolves around the following suggestions. The police should create a feedback mechanism for information by the victims of police harassment while promotion of deserving officers should be swiftly done and be properly coordinated. Police training curriculum should be revised to impact requisite skills for modern crime fighting on the Nigerian police. There should be conscious and consistent adoption of community oriented Policing in Cross River State through functional partnership with the community on collaborative policing for the security of Cross River State. The federal government should adequately fund the police with close monitoring of the utilization of such fund. This will discourage the beggarly attitude of the police authority and over reliance on well-wishers who gives the fund and use the opportunity for ulterior motives. A special fund for policing should be created and certain percentage of profits from commercial entities should be dedicated to this fund because security is everyone's responsibility. Nigerians should also be obedient to the laws of the land and be more patriotic by reporting criminal tendencies to the police in the State or elsewhere in Nigeria to aid the efforts of the Police at curtailing crime in Cross River State.

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