

THE ROLE OF THE NIGERIA IMMIGRATION SERVICE IN BORDER CONTROL AND MANAGEMENT IN THE FIGHT AGAINST INSECURITY AND BANDITRY IN KEBBI STATE

Paper Presented at the maiden Kebbi State Security Summit, Birnin- Kebbi

Theme: *Community Custodians and Command*

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Date: 27th August 2025

Protocol & Purpose

Your Excellency, the Executive Governor of Kebbi State; the Emir of Gwandu and Chairman, Kebbi State Council of Chiefs; distinguished members of the Kebbi State Elders Consultative Forum; respected traditional rulers, security chiefs, community leaders, gentlemen of the press.

I stand before you today to present to the eminent persons seated here, the perspective of the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) on how effective border governance can be the decisive factor in tackling banditry and trans-national crime in Kebbi State.

1. Introduction

Kebbi State is located in the northwest of Nigeria. It shares extended land and river borders with Niger Republic to the north and Benin Republic to the west. These borders allow legal trade, migration, and cultural exchange. However, they also make the state vulnerable to problems like illegal migration, smuggling, human trafficking, and cross-border banditry.

The Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) is responsible for protecting Nigeria's borders. This presentation highlights our duties, some security challenges in Kebbi State, how we work with other agencies and communities, and recommendations for improving border security.

2. The roles of the Nigeria Immigration Service as a Border security and Migration Management Agency.

The Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) is the lead agency for border control in Nigeria under the Immigration Act, 2015. Our key roles are:

- a. Control of persons entering or leaving Nigeria
- b. Issuance of travel documents, including Nigerian passports to bona fide Nigerians within and outside Nigeria
- c. Issuance of residence permits to foreigners in Nigeria
- d. Border surveillance and patrol
- e. Enforcement of laws and regulations with which we are directly charged
- f. Performance of para-military duties within or outside Nigeria as may be required

3. Border Management Challenges and Security Threats in Kebbi State

Kebbi State, located in Nigeria's North-West, faces a complex web of border management challenges and security threats, primarily due to its porous borders with the Niger Republic and Benin Republic. Below is a detailed breakdown of the issues.

3.1 Porous Borders and Infiltration Risks

- **Geographical Vulnerability:** Kebbi shares extensive borders with Niger and Benin, with dense forest belts and riverine routes that are difficult to monitor.
- **Infiltration by Armed Groups:** Bandits and jihadist groups like Lakurawa exploit these corridors to smuggle weapons, launch attacks, and evade security forces.
- **Cross-Border Smuggling:** Informal trade routes (e.g., Dole-Kaina axis) are used to traffic arms, drugs, and contraband, often with alleged links to extremist financing

3.2 Structural Weaknesses in Border Security

- **Understaffed & Underequipped Personnel:** Shortage of border patrol personnel, inadequate surveillance technology, and poor inter-agency coordination hinder effective monitoring.

3.3 Socio-Cultural Complications

- **Transnational Ethnic Ties:** Shared ethnicities and intermarriages between Nigerian and Nigerien communities make identity verification and border control difficult.
- **Community Complicity:** Some border residents are co-opted by smugglers or militants, either due to economic hardship or fear of reprisals.

4. NIS Actions against Insecurity & Banditry

4.1 Physical Border Patrols and Presence

- The NIS maintains a physical presence at control posts and deploys personnel for patrols along the vast and often porous borders of Kebbi State.
- The Service has fortified its presence at various locations, including Forward Operating Bases (FOBs) like the one at Kyengyakwai.
- These physical presence is crucial for intercepting illegal cross-border movements and preventing bandits from entering or exiting the country.

4.2 Deployment of E-Border Solutions:

- The NIS, under the leadership of Comptroller-General Kemi Nanna Nandap, has deployed e-border solutions in Kebbi State.
- This is a strategic move to enhance migration management and national security by using technology to checkmate trans-border crimes and other related offenses.
- The e-border technology were installed at key border posts, including Kamba Control Post, Dole Kaina, and Lolo. Future expansion of the solution is proposed to cover Bagudo- Maje/Tsamiya control post.
- The intelligence gathered from these e-border solutions has improved intelligence communication with other security agencies to improve collaboration.

4.3 Collaborative Operations with Other Security Agencies:

- The NIS actively works with other security agencies, such as the Nigerian Army, Nigeria Police Force, and others, to combat insecurity in the state.
- The Service has emphasized the need for a collaborative and coordinated approach, and it participates in joint task forces and intelligence-sharing platforms.
- This collaboration is vital for a comprehensive response to the banditry crisis, as no single agency can tackle the problem alone.

4.4 Engagement with Border Communities:

- The NIS has engaged with local communities, including traditional leaders like the Emir of Gwandu, Argungu and community leaders in places like Kamba and Lollo,
- The purpose of this engagement is to build trust, sensitize the communities on the dangers of aiding criminals, and encourage them to report suspicious activities.
- This community-based intelligence is a valuable resource in the fight against banditry

4.5 Sacrifice and Resilience

- The NIS has faced direct attacks from bandits in Kebbi State, with facilities and personnel being targeted.
- For example, there was a recorded attack on NIS border facilities and contractors at the Kangiwa Border in January 2025.
- These incidents underscore the high-risk nature of their work and their unwavering commitment to fulfilling their mandate of border security despite the threats

4.6 Joint Operations and International Partnerships

- Coordinated raids and patrols with other security agencies to maintain internal safety, security, fight smuggling of migrant and human trafficking
- NIS Participated in Operation Swift Response (Border Drill) involving 7 sister security agencies and International neighbors Niger, Benin in a Tripartite Joint Border Patrol Team (JBPT) August 2019 to 2022

5. Recommendations

- a. Increase Government investment in rural border community infrastructures and development
- b. Create Kebbi Border Community Security Trust Fund
- c. State Government to support the extension of NIS e-border technology in high-risk areas.
- d. Increase deployment of personnel by respective border management agencies to create more border patrol visibility
- e. Increase support in the provision of logistics for Patrol and monitoring of border areas
- f. Hold weekly intelligence-sharing meetings between all security agencies.
- g. Nigeria Immigration Service to be co-opted in the state Co-security Committee, Kebbi State, being a border State.

6. Conclusion

The NIS plays a vital role in protecting Kebbi State's borders and ensuring safe, legal migration. Winning the fight against insecurity and banditry needs technology, resources, teamwork, and community support.

The theme of this summit "Community Custodians and Command" underscores the fact that border security is a shared responsibility. By integrating the command of security agencies with the trust, cooperation, and active participation of our communities, we can strengthen safety across Kebbi State. This collective, whole of society approach offers us the best chance to sustainably address the security challenges confronting the state.

Thank you for listening. Long live Kebbi State. Long live the Federal Republic of Nigeria