



# POLICY BRIEF

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## Urgent Need for Legislative Oversight on the Proposed Deployment of 11,000 NSCDC Agro-Rangers to Protect Farmers

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### Executive Summary

Nigeria's agricultural sector continues to face significant security threats from banditry, insurgency, and criminal violence, particularly in rural farming communities. In 2025, multiple attacks across states, including Borno, Benue, Plateau, and Niger, resulted in the deaths and kidnappings of farmers, disrupting farming activities and threatening national food security. Notably, in January 2025, at least 40 farmers were reportedly killed near Lake Chad by insurgents linked to Boko Haram and ISWAP. These incidents underscore the vulnerability of rural communities and the ongoing risk to agricultural production.

In response, the Federal Government established the NSCDC Agro-Rangers Programme in 2016 to protect farmers and agricultural investments, initially focusing on conflict-affected areas such as Borno State. By 2024, approximately 10,000 Agro-Rangers had been deployed nationwide, but attacks persisted in many locations, with some farmers abandoning their lands despite the programme. Recently, the NSCDC announced plans to deploy 11,000 Agro-Rangers nationwide ahead of the 2026 farming season. While this reflects recognition of the threats facing farmers, questions remain regarding the operational effectiveness, strategic distribution, and coordination of the deployment with other security agencies.

The issues raised include whether the proposed deployment differs from previous operations; the adequacy of coverage in high-risk areas; clarity on operational coordination with the Nigerian Army, Police, and community-based security structures; and transparency regarding funding, logistics, and personnel readiness. Without addressing these structural and operational gaps, repeated deployments risk being symbolic rather than substantively improving farmer security.

Given the National Assembly's constitutional oversight mandate over security institutions and national development sectors, legislative intervention is necessary to ensure protection of national food security, evaluate the effectiveness of the Agro-Rangers Programme, enforce accountability in security policy implementation, and strengthen rural security governance.

To address these issues, the National Assembly, through its Committees on Interior, National Security and Intelligence, Agriculture, and Police Affairs, is respectfully urged to:



1. **Conduct** a joint oversight review of the Agro-Rangers Programme since its establishment in 2016 to assess personnel deployment, operational coverage across states, and measurable outcomes in reducing attacks on farmers.
2. **Invite** NSCDC leadership to provide a detailed briefing on the proposed deployment of 11,000 Agro-Rangers, including criteria for selecting priority farming areas, operational mandates, and rules of engagement.
3. **Request** clarification from NSCDC on how Agro-Rangers operations will be coordinated with the Nigerian Army, the Nigeria Police Force, and state or community-based security structures.
4. **Require** NSCDC to provide details on funding allocations, logistics, equipment, mobility support, training standards, and overall operational readiness of personnel.

Robust legislative oversight will ensure that the Agro-Rangers Programme is strategically implemented, adequately resourced, properly coordinated, and capable of providing meaningful protection to farmers and rural communities.

## Background

Nigeria's agricultural sector continues to face severe security threats from banditry, insurgency, and criminal violence, particularly in rural farming communities. In 2025, multiple attacks on farmers were reported across several states, resulting in deaths, kidnappings, and widespread disruption of farming activities<sup>1</sup>.

For example, in January 2025, at least 40 farmers were reportedly killed near Lake Chad while working on their farms by insurgents linked to Boko Haram and ISWAP<sup>2</sup>. In November 2025, attacks intensified across several states including Benue, Plateau, Niger, and Borno, where farmers were killed or abducted during farming and harvesting activities<sup>3</sup>. Such incidents have heightened concerns about rural safety and the potential impact on national food production.

In response to these threats, the Federal Government previously established a specialised unit within the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) known as the Agro-Rangers to protect farmers and agricultural investments. The unit was created in 2016 at the request of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, with initial deployments beginning in conflict-affected areas such as Borno State.

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<sup>1</sup> Odeniyi, S. (2026, March 8). 11,000 NSCDC personnel to protect farmers against attacks. *Punch*. <https://punchng.com/11000-nscdc-personnel-to-protect-farmers-against-attacks/>

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*

<sup>3</sup> *ibid*



Over time, the programme expanded significantly. By 2024, the NSCDC reported that about 10,000 Agro-Rangers had already been deployed across the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory to protect farms and address farmer-herder conflicts<sup>4</sup>.

Despite these deployments, attacks on farmers have continued in many parts of the country. Reports from affected communities indicate that the presence of Agro-Rangers has often been insufficient to prevent attacks, with some farmers abandoning threatened areas despite the programme's existence<sup>5</sup>.

Against this backdrop, the NSCDC recently announced plans to deploy 11,000 Agro-Rangers nationwide ahead of the 2026 farming season, following increased attacks on farmers during the 2025 farming cycle.

### **Issue:**

While the announcement of the deployment reflects recognition of the security threats confronting farmers, several critical concerns arise.

First, the Agro-Rangers initiative is not new. The programme has existed for nearly a decade, with thousands of personnel reportedly deployed nationwide. However, violent attacks against farmers have continued, raising questions about the effectiveness of previous deployments.

Also, there is limited clarity on how the new deployment differs from previous ones. It is unclear whether the announcement represents an expansion of the existing force, a redeployment strategy, or a restructuring of current operations.

Similarly, the announcement does not clearly explain how 11,000 personnel will be distributed across Nigeria's vast agricultural regions, particularly in areas experiencing the highest levels of insecurity. There is also insufficient public information regarding operational coordination between the NSCDC Agro-Rangers and other security agencies, including the Nigerian Army, the Nigeria Police Force, and local security initiatives.

These gaps raise concerns that the proposed deployment may repeat previous approaches without addressing the structural and operational challenges that have limited their effectiveness.

### **Rationale for Legislative Action:**

The National Assembly has constitutional oversight responsibility over security institutions and national development sectors, including agriculture.

Legislative action is necessary for several reasons:

- 1. Protection of National Food Security:** Persistent attacks on farmers threaten food production and contribute to rising food prices and inflation.

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<sup>4</sup> Ogundele, B. (2024, August 11). Fed govt deploys 10,000 agro rangers to boost food security. *The Nation*. <https://thenationonline.ng/fed-govt-deploys-10000-agro-rangers-to-boost-food-security/>

<sup>5</sup> Adeyemi, A. (2025, February 12). Ondo Farmers Left Vulnerable Despite Agro-Ranger Promise. *The Investigator*. <https://theinvestigator.ng/2025/02/ondo-farmers-left-vulnerable-despite-agro-ranger-promise/>



2. **Evaluation of Existing Security Initiatives:** Given that Agro-Rangers have already been deployed for several years, there is a need to evaluate whether the programme has achieved its intended objectives.
3. **Accountability in Security Policy Implementation:** Announcements of large-scale security deployments must be accompanied by clear operational frameworks, budgetary provisions, and measurable outcomes.
4. **Strengthening Rural Security Governance:** Effective protection of farmers requires coordinated strategies across multiple security institutions and levels of government.

Without proper oversight, the repeated announcement of Agro-Rangers deployments risks becoming a recurring policy response without measurable improvement in farmer security.

### **Recommendations to the National Assembly**

The National Assembly, through its Committees on Interior, National Security and Intelligence, Agriculture, and Police Affairs, is respectfully urged to:

1. Conduct a joint oversight review of the Agro-Rangers Programme by initiating a legislative review of the initiative since its establishment in 2016 to assess the number of personnel deployed over the years, operational coverage across states and measurable outcomes in reducing attacks on farmers.
2. Invite the NSCDC leadership to present a detailed briefing on how the proposed deployment of 11,000 Agro-Rangers will be implemented, the criteria for selecting priority farming areas and the operational mandate and rules of engagement for Agro-Rangers personnel.
3. Request clarification from the NSCDC on how Agro-Rangers operations will be coordinated with the Nigerian Army, the Nigeria Police Force, and state and community-based security structures.
4. Require the NSCDC to provide details on funding allocations for the programme, logistics, equipment, and mobility support for personnel and training standards/operational readiness.

### **Conclusion:**

The proposed deployment of 11,000 NSCDC Agro-Rangers underscores the seriousness of the security challenges facing Nigeria's agricultural sector. However, since similar deployments have already been undertaken over the past decade without a significant reduction in attacks on farmers, it is imperative that the National Assembly exercise robust oversight.

A thorough legislative review will help ensure that the programme is strategically designed, adequately resourced, properly coordinated, and capable of delivering meaningful protection to Nigerian farmers and rural communities.

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