

Olagoke Oluwafemi AWOTAYO (1)
Osun State University, Nigeria
Adewale Mathew OGUNGBENRO (2)
Osun State University, Nigeria
Abúmbola Fikayo OLANIRAN (3)
Adéyemí Federal University of Education, Nigeria
Eleojo Aishatu ADAJI (4)
Osun State University, Nigeria

CAUGHT IN THE MIX. AN APPRAISAL OF NIGERIAN MULTIPLE SECURITY CHALLENGES

ABSTRACT	<p><i>The fundamental necessity of every society is the security of her citizens against internal and external aggression. A secured society promotes development and attracts investors thereby promoting socio-economic well-being of the citizen and building responsible and responsive citizens. The high rate of insecurity has denied Nigeria government and citizens of peaceful atmosphere and socio-economic prosperity is at the low ebb. The intermittent conflicts such as ethno religious, communal, insurgency, farmers – herdsman conflict has weakened Nigeria security architecture. The emergence of ethnic militias and non-state actors contributed immensely to the insecurity in Nigeria.</i></p> <p><i>The complex security situation in Nigeria ranging from insurgency, ethno religious, oil theft, farmers- herdsman, kidnapping, drug, and human trafficking coupled with the porous borders and associated criminal activities among others were critically examined and posed that socio-economic development and livelihood of Nigeria are at risk, except proactive measure designing to incorporate bottom- top approach, Nigeria will soon slide into failed or collapsed state. This paper, therefore, recommends promotion of socio-economic, collaborative intelligence approach as well as empowerment will contribute in no measure to degrade insecurity and ensure peaceful co-existence.</i></p>
Keywords:	Armed bandits; security challenge; security; piracy; oil theft
Contact details of the authors:	Email: olagoke.awotayo@uniosun.edu.ng (1) ogungbenromathew@gmail.com (2) olaniranaf@aceondo.edu.ng (3) eleojo.adaji@uniosun.edu.ng (4)
Institutional affiliation of the authors	Osun State University (1) (2) (4) Adeyemi Federal University (3)
Institutions address	P.M.B 4494, Osogbo, Osun State, Nigeria P.M.B Ondo, Ondo State, Nigeria

Introduction

Security challenges are a global concern, and Nigeria, like many other countries, is grappling with this issue¹. Non-state actors have taken control of Nigeria's security structure, resulting in violent clashes between farmers and herders, which have jeopardized national security and caused humanitarian crises². The conflict

¹ Charles Okechukwu Iwundu, Blessing Thom-Utoya, *Security Challenges as Threats to National Unity in Nigeria: Causes, Prevention and Treatment*, "Security Challenges", Vol. 14, 2013, pp. 16-21

² Joab-Peterside Sofiri, *Nigeria's Contemporary Security Challenges: Herders-Farmers Conflict and Banditry*, "Crisis 10", No. 17, 2020, pp. 27-38

between farmers and herders in several Nigerian states has exacerbated the country's security situation. This conflict, often characterized by violent clashes over land and water resources, has led to loss of lives and property, displacement of people, and heightened tension among ethnic groups. Despite the Nigerian government's efforts to curtail these threats by establishing multiple security agencies, it appears that the internal security threats have outpaced the internal security operations of the military and the police. This could be attributed to several factors including inadequate manpower, lack of modern equipment, corruption, poor welfare for security personnel, among others. Emerging internal security threats in Nigeria such as kidnapping, hostage and ransom-taking, illegal migration, discrimination, and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW) have further complicated the security landscape. These threats not only strain the resources of security agencies but also pose significant challenges to peace and stability. Kidnapping for ransom has become a lucrative business for criminals in Nigeria. This has been fueled by high unemployment rates, poverty, and weak law enforcement. Similarly, illegal migration is a major concern. Many Nigerians embark on perilous journeys through the Sahara Desert and across the Mediterranean Sea in search of greener pastures in Europe. This has led to loss of lives and human trafficking.

Discrimination based on ethnicity, religion or political affiliation is another issue that threatens peace in Nigeria. It breeds resentment and can lead to conflict. Furthermore, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons has escalated violence in the country. These weapons are often used by criminals, insurgents, and even disgruntled individuals to perpetrate violence. Opongo provides a useful framework for understanding these challenges. He suggests that Africa faces four interconnected categories of conflict¹. These include armed conflicts primarily between the state and armed groups; sectarian violence led by militia or organized armed groups; political violence advanced by the state against the population, especially using security forces; and low-key communal conflicts. These categories are not mutually exclusive and often arise at different levels. For instance, an armed conflict could trigger sectarian violence or vice versa. Similarly, political violence could lead to communal conflicts or vice versa. This complexity makes conflict resolution a daunting task.

The impact of insecurity on Nigeria's development

Nigeria faces various security challenges, such as terrorism, insurgency, banditry, ethnic and religious conflicts, kidnapping, and cybercrime. These challenges have serious consequences for the country's development in various aspects. Some of the consequences include economic consequences, human capital and education consequences, infrastructure and development projects consequences, social cohesion consequences, migration and displacement consequences, healthcare and public services consequences, political stability consequences, and global reputation consequences².

Insecurity hinders economic activities, Farmers are often afraid to farm their lands due to the risk of attacks, leading to food scarcity and higher food prices. Businesses incur higher security costs, which can affect their profitability and competitiveness. Insecurity impacts education as many schools in insecure areas are forced to shut down, depriving children of education and increasing illiteracy rates. The fear of kidnapping and attacks can dissuade parents from sending their children to school, resulting in long-term consequences for human capital development^{3,4}.

Insecurity impedes the execution of vital infrastructure projects, such as roads, bridges, and power plants, limiting economic development. The threat of attacks can discourage investors from financing large-scale infrastructure projects, hampering modernization and industrialization efforts. Insecurity disrupts healthcare services, making it hard for citizens to access medical care during emergencies. Health workers may be unwilling to work in unstable areas, leading to healthcare shortages.

Ethnic and religious conflicts worsen social divisions, leading to distrust and tension among different groups, hindering social cohesion and unity. Displacement of communities due to insecurity can lead to the collapse of traditional social structures and support systems. Widespread insecurity can undermine political

¹ Elias O. Opongo, *Enhancing Conflict Resolution in Africa. in the Palgrave Handbook of Sustainable Peace and Security in Africa*, Cham Springer International Publishing, 2022, pp. 505-522

² Pedro Conceição, *Human Development Report 2020-the Next Frontier: Human Development and the Anthropocene*, "United Nations Development Program: Human Development Report", 2020

³ World Bank, *Nigeria Transport Sector Diagnostic, 2019*, <https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/208051543901003724/nigeria-transport-sector-note> (28.05.2024)

⁴ Piers Pigou, *Revolt and Repression in Zimbabwe*, International Crisis Group, 2019

stability and trust in government institutions. It can create a fertile ground for extremism and radicalization, further destabilizing the region¹. Insecurity often leads to internal displacement, as people escape violence and seek refuge in safer areas, straining resources, and services in host communities. It can also contribute to international migration as people seek asylum or better opportunities abroad.

Persistent insecurity damages Nigeria's global reputation and can deter foreign investors and tourists. It can also strain diplomatic relations with other countries, affecting international cooperation and partnerships. Addressing the issue of insecurity in Nigeria requires a comprehensive approach that combines security measures with economic, social, and political reforms. Promoting dialogue, addressing root causes, improving governance, and investing in education and job creation are essential steps toward achieving sustainable development and lasting peace in the country.

Security architecture in Nigeria

Ojatorotu put it that security sector in Nigeria is not people oriented; it is often disarticulated from the larger society, and it is obsolete in structure. He further noted that the security structure has not been palatable; rather is getting worse day by day. Alemika observed that Nigerian security again comprises of the armed forces- Army, Air force and Navy, the Nigeria Police, department of state security national intelligence agency, Nigerian immigration services, Nigeria custom service, Nigeria prison service, national Drug, law and enforcement agency, federal road safety commission, federal fire services and Nigeria security and civil defense corp. It is oblivious that the extension of this timeline security and intelligence agencies should guarantee national security but the security situation in Nigeria has totally collapse. Nigeria, like many other countries, is grappling with significant security challenges. The country's security situation has been exacerbated by a myriad of issues, including the farmers-herders conflict, kidnapping, hostage and ransom-taking, illegal migration, discrimination, and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

The farmers-herders conflict in several Nigerian states has led to loss of lives and property, displacement of people, and heightened tension among ethnic groups. Kidnapping for ransom has become a lucrative business for criminals in Nigeria, fueled by high unemployment rates, poverty, and weak law enforcement. Illegal migration is another major concern, with many Nigerians embarking on perilous journeys through the Sahara Desert and across the Mediterranean Sea in search of greener pastures in Europe. This has led to loss of lives and human trafficking². Discrimination based on ethnicity, religion or political affiliation breeds resentment and can lead to conflict. Furthermore, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW) has escalated violence in the country. These weapons are often used by criminals, insurgents, and even disgruntled individuals to perpetrate violence.

Despite these challenges, the Nigerian government has made efforts to curtail internal and external security threats by establishing multiple security agencies. However, these efforts appear to be insufficient as internal security threats have outpaced the internal security operations of the military and the police. Nigeria's security architecture comprises of the military (Air Force, Army, navy), police, customs, and lately the Civil Defense Corps. However, despite boasting robust security architecture, the impact of these agencies in tackling the nation's security challenges is yet to be felt. The state of insecurity in Nigeria can be linked to government failure. This is manifested by the incapacity of the government to deliver public services and to provide basic needs for the masses. The scale of insecurity threatens the very fabric of Nigerian society: "With every attack, human lives are lost or permanently damaged. In response to these challenges, there have been calls for reforming Nigeria's security architecture. Every nation reform or restructures its security formations, institutions, and strategies in response to established attacks or as a consequence of informed analysis of an anticipated threat to national security or both.

In conclusion, addressing Nigeria's security challenges requires a holistic approach that takes into consideration the complexities of these challenges and their impact on state stability. It involves not only strengthening security agencies but also addressing socio-economic issues that fuel these challenges. This includes addressing root causes such as poverty, unemployment, inequality, corruption among others. There is

¹ Council of Foreign Relations, *Nigeria's Insecurity Problem: Causes and Solutions*, February 12, 2021, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/nigerias-insecurity-problem-causes-and-solutions> (12.05.2024)

² Adeniji A. Agunloye, *Urban Transport Challenges in Nigeria: The Need for a Paradigm Shift*, "Journal of Transport and Supply Chain Management", Vol. 11, No. 1, 2017, pp.13-27

also a need for capacity building for security agencies. This includes training in modern security techniques, provision of modern equipment among others. There is also a need for community engagement in security matters. Communities should be involved in identifying security threats and finding solutions. The transcoder related crime has various implications on development of Nigerian state including the activities of touts and illegal migrants, illegal lumbering and poaching and host of others. Essentially, security is primarily a preoccupation of the state to protect its sovereignty, territorial integrity, citizen and their values.

Transportation and insecurity in Nigeria

Transportation is a critical element in the socioeconomic development of any nation, as it enables the movement of people, goods, and services, thereby supporting economic activities³. However, in developing countries like Nigeria, transportation systems often encounter numerous challenges that impede economic progress. This essay will explore the implications of transportation insecurity in Nigeria, including issues such as poor road conditions, inadequate transportation infrastructure, overcrowded modes of transport, and bureaucratic hurdles that undermine the efficiency of the transportation sector. One of the major challenges facing transportation in Nigeria is the poor condition of roads. Nigeria has one of the highest rates of road accidents in the world, primarily due to the poor state of its road network¹. The lack of maintenance and rehabilitation of roads leads to frequent potholes, which not only slow down transportation but also contribute to accidents and vehicle damage. This hampers the movement of goods and people, resulting in increased transportation costs and reduced efficiency¹. In addition to poor road conditions, Nigeria also suffers from inadequate transportation infrastructure. The World Bank (2019) highlights that the country's transportation infrastructure, including ports, railways, and airports, is insufficient to meet the growing demands of its population and economy³. This inadequacy leads to congestion, delays, and increased costs in transporting goods and services. Furthermore, the lack of modern transportation infrastructure limits the country's ability to attract foreign investment and promote economic growth³. Moreover, overcrowded modes of transport pose a significant challenge to transportation in Nigeria. The country's population continues to grow rapidly, resulting in increased demand for transportation services. However, the existing modes of transport, such as buses and trains, are often overcrowded, uncomfortable, and unsafe². This not only compromises the safety and well-being of passengers but also reduces the efficiency of transportation, as overcrowding leads to delays and longer travel times. The bureaucratic hurdles further hinder the efficiency of the transportation sector in Nigeria. The World Bank (2018) highlights that the complex and time-consuming processes involved in obtaining licenses, permits, and clearances for transportation-related activities create unnecessary delays and increase transaction costs³. This bureaucratic red tape discourages investment in the transportation sector and stifles innovation and competition, ultimately hampering economic growth¹. Transportation insecurity in Nigeria has significant implications for the country's socioeconomic development. Poor road conditions, inadequate transportation infrastructure, overcrowded modes of transport, and bureaucratic hurdles all contribute to the inefficiency of the transportation sector. Addressing these challenges is crucial for Nigeria to unlock its economic potential and promote sustainable development. The Role of Transportation in Economic Development. Transportation is an integral part of human activity, laying the groundwork for socioeconomic interactions. It involves the physical movement of people and goods from one place to another, enabling trade, commerce, and social connectivity². Efficient transportation systems contribute to economic growth and development in several ways: Trade Facilitation: A well-functioning transportation system allows for the smooth movement of goods between producers and consumers, fostering trade and market access. In Nigeria, however, inadequate transportation infrastructure hinders the movement of goods, leading to higher costs and reduced economic efficiency. Transportation networks provide access to essential resources such as raw materials, which are vital for manufacturing and industrial processes. When transportation systems are unreliable, businesses face difficulties accessing these resources, impeding economic development². The transportation sector itself generates employment opportunities. Efficient transportation systems create jobs in areas such as logistics, maintenance, and operation, contributing to reduced unemployment rates. Regional

¹ World Bank, *Nigeria: Transport Sector Note 2018*, <https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/208051543901003724/nigeria-transport-sector-note> (07.05.2023)

² Oyeyinka Akinwumi, *Transportation Infrastructure and Economic Development in Nigeria*, "Journal of Transport Geography", Vol. 74, 2019, pp. 45-63

Integration: Effective transportation infrastructure connects regions and facilitates economic integration. In Nigeria, disparities in transportation infrastructure between the north and south can exacerbate regional economic inequalities. Nigeria faces a multitude of challenges in its transportation sector that contribute to transportation insecurity and hinder economic development.

According to a report by the World Bank, Nigeria's road network is in a poor state, resulting in increased travel time and higher maintenance costs for vehicle². The lack of a robust rail network, efficient water transport systems, and modern ports in Nigeria has been highlighted by various experts². Overcrowding in Nigeria's transportation system has been documented by several studies². Poorly enforced traffic regulations in Nigeria have been linked to chaotic road conditions and safety risks for commuters. Transportation insecurity in Nigeria exacerbates these challenges and has severe implications for the country's economic development. Recent events such as the attack on the Abuja-Kaduna train on April 6, 2022, highlight the vulnerability of Nigeria's transportation system.

Arms proliferations and insecurity in Nigeria

The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is a critical issue that impacts global security and development. Despite the establishment of the UN Program of Action in 2001, which aimed to prevent, combat, and eradicate the illicit trade in SALW, it has struggled to meet the expectations of states and civil society. The proliferation of SALW remains a daunting challenge due to the vast number of military and civilian-held weapons, making the goal of addressing the illicit trade in "all its aspects" seemingly unattainable at the current juncture¹. Research has shown a significant rise in civilian ownership of SALW since 2006. In sub-Saharan Africa, for instance, it is estimated that there are approximately 11 million state-owned SALW and a staggering 40 million in the hands of civilians². This region exemplifies the difficulties in controlling the spread of these weapons, which are often exacerbated by weak governance, internal conflicts, and porous borders³.

The pursuit of democratic governance in West Africa has been fraught with challenges for over fifty years, including coup d'états, the spread of illicit small arms and light weapons (SALW), ethnic violence, and armed conflicts. The region is notorious for its resource conflicts, political crises, insurgencies, and intra-state wars, often described as a theater of anarchy or bloody civil wars⁴. Legal arms exports between states are a source of concern, and the United Nations Programme of Action on small arms (UNPoA) has been criticized for its inadequate and ineffective arms control and disarmament efforts¹. The situation is exacerbated by the fact that the production of new SALW is outpacing global disarmament efforts⁵. The proliferation of SALW in Africa poses a significant threat to the continent's long-term social and economic development⁶. There is a consensus that this proliferation has led to increased criminality, youth violence, hostage-taking, and cross-border crimes⁷. Despite the recognition of the dangers posed by SALW, Africa has yet to develop the necessary resilience to effectively address the problem⁸. It is suggested that Africa needs to manage SALW through national action, the implementation of treaties, and strengthened international cooperation⁹. The hope is that effective management of SALW will create conditions conducive to realizing Africa's socio-economic goals, as outlined in Agenda 2063¹⁰.

¹ *Idem*

² Small Arms Survey, *Small Arms Survey 2019: Global Estimates of Civilian Held Firearms*, Geneva, 2019, p. 412

³ Florquin Nicolas, Eric G. Berman, (Eds.), *Armed and Aimless: Armed Groups, Guns and Human Security in the Ecowas Region*, Small Arms Survey, Geneva, 2005, pp. 332-333

⁴ Bøås Morten, Kevin C. Dunn, (Eds.), *African Guerrillas: Raging Against the Machine*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2007, pp. 9-35

⁵ Richard Guy Parker, Marni Sommer, (Eds.) *Routledge Handbook of Global Public Health*, Routledge, 2011, pp. 506

⁶ Owen Greene, Nic Marsh, *Small Arms, Crime and Conflict*, Taylor&Francis, 2011, pp. 248-262

⁷ Rachel J. Stohl, Stohl Ernstgendoorn, *Stopping the Destructive Spread of Small Arms: How Small Arms and Light Weapons Proliferation Undermines Security and Development*, Center for American Progress, 2010

⁸ Robert Muggah, Peter Batchelor, *Development Held Hostage: Assessing the Effects of Small Arms on Human Development*. UNDP, April 2002, p. 8

⁹ Guy Lamb Grant, *Disarmament: A Basic Guide* (4th ed.) United Nations Publications, 2013, pp. 1-30

¹⁰ African Union Commission, *Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want*, 2015

Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) has several implications, particularly in regions. The post-Gaddafi Libya serves as an example of how instability can be exported within a region. Socio-cultural and environmental dynamics that transcend national boundaries, such as refugee flows, insurgency, transnational conflict, and crime in the Sahel are examined⁴. The state's legitimate monopoly on violence links arms to national power. In practice, this monopoly involves exchanging capital for arms to equip security forces with weapons of war. The focus is on Libya and how small arms and light weapons diffused out of the power vacuum following its breakdown. Before the 2011 uprising, Libya's armed forces were considered one of the best equipped in Africa¹. However, when the regime collapsed, Libya became a hub for an illicit arms market supplying rebels and extremist groups across the Sahara-Sahel. The proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) has several implications, particularly in regions that are already facing socio-economic and political challenges. Here are some of the key implications: The availability of SALW can escalate violence, lead to the outbreak of conflicts, and prolong existing ones. These weapons can be used by armed groups, insurgents, and criminals, leading to a breakdown of law and order. To mitigate these implications, it's crucial for nations and international organizations to work together in implementing effective arms control measures, strengthening legal frameworks, promoting disarmament, and enhancing border security.

Farmer-herder conflicts in Nigeria

Salau, Ogezi, and Yusuf investigate the root causes of farmer-herder conflicts in Nigeria and assess the scope of the conflict, which has transformed from a disagreement over agricultural resources to an indistinct crisis threatening national unity². The ongoing misconceptions and misinterpretations of the conflict's causes and motives further underscore the polarized nature of Nigerian inter-ethnic interactions and the gradual fading of national identity. The escalating frequency and intensity of the farmer-herder conflict have given rise to more violent herders and a tribal militia movement aiming to counteract the aggression. Analysts have voiced concerns about these conflicts spiraling into a complex civil war, emphasizing the need for government intervention. Sunday and Muhammad probe the link between criminal labeling and the scourge of insecurity in contemporary Nigeria, using case studies such as the farmers-herders conflict, banditry, terrorism, secessionist agitations, and human trafficking for sexual exploitation³. They argue that there is a causal relationship between crime, criminal labeling, and insecurity in Nigeria. Moreover, they suggest that the nature of crime and the policing system in Nigeria, in relation to the criminal justice system, has led to certain forms of crime and associated groups or individuals being stigmatized.

Farmer-herder conflicts in Nigeria have emerged as a persistent issue with profound implications for societal harmony, food security, and economic growth. These conflicts, often rooted in competition for resources such as land and water, are further complicated by ethnic, religious, and socio-economic factors. This essay aims to explore the causes and impacts of these conflicts and propose potential pathways to resolution. The primary catalyst for farmer-herder conflicts is resource scarcity, particularly concerning arable land and water. With Nigeria's population on the rise, the demand for these resources intensifies. Climate change-induced phenomena such as prolonged droughts and desertification in northern Nigeria have compelled herders to migrate southwards in search of greener pastures, thereby increasing competition with farmers. The surge in cattle rustling and banditry has further fueled these conflicts. Herders often resort to violence to safeguard their livestock, leading to clashes with farming communities. Nigeria's ethnic and religious diversity plays a significant role in these conflicts. Differences between herding communities, predominantly Fulani, and various ethnic farming communities often escalate into hostilities. The lack of clear land tenure systems in many parts of Nigeria contributes to disputes over land ownership and usage. The widespread availability of small arms and light weapons in Nigeria intensifies these conflicts, making them more lethal and challenging to manage.

¹ Kerry Chávez, Ori Swed, *Conflict Contagion via Weapons Proliferation Out of Collapsed States*, "Small Wars&Insurgencies", Vol. 35, No. 2, 2024, pp. 191-227

² Salau Ogezi, Yusuf Nasiru, *Latent Causes and Magnitude of Farmers-Herder Agricultural Resource Conflicts that has Formed the New Wave of Conflict in Nigeria*, "Asian Journal of Agricultural Extension. Economics&Sociology", 2022, pp. 94-103

³ Sunday Omotuyi, *The Burden of Borders: Reassessing the Impacts of Nigeria's Border Closure on the National Security*, "African Security", Vol. 15, No. 3, 2022

These persistent conflicts have far-reaching consequences: conflicts have led to the loss of thousands of lives and displacement of communities. Both farmers' and herders' livelihoods have been severely disrupted. Conflicts disrupt agricultural activities and herding patterns, leading to reduced agricultural output and food scarcity. Conflicts result in property damage, leading to financial losses for both agricultural and pastoral communities. The uncertainty surrounding land use also deters investment in agriculture. These conflicts deepen divisions along ethnic and religious lines, resulting in mistrust among communities that were previously peaceful neighbors. Millions of Nigerians have been internally displaced due to these conflicts, causing humanitarian crises in affected areas. Clashes often occur along Nigeria's borders with neighboring countries, potentially straining diplomatic relations.

Border crimes, narcotics/drug trafficking

Esan, Ngwira and Osunmakeinde observed that the surge in the flow of people, goods, and ideas has given rise to a new wave of smuggling, trafficking, terrorism, cross-border crime, illegal migration, and other issues¹. Aniche, Moyo and Nshimbi argued that the "coloniality", "permeability", and "ungovernability" of borders in West Africa have led to undocumented migration for economic reasons such as herding, farming, fishing, hunting, and trading². This occurs alongside human smuggling, human trafficking, gun-running, terrorism, and money laundering. The rise in these cross-border criminal activities has generated national, regional, and global concerns. Ismail and Rabi noted that border crimes such as narcotics/drug trafficking, internet crime (advance fee fraud/money laundering), human trafficking, firearms trafficking, recruitment of child soldiers, mercenaries, smuggling of illegal goods, minerals and natural resources and cash crops among others are rampant across these borders³. They emphasized the need for improved manpower, sensitization and enlightenment of border security, technological improvement, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration for peace building, security, mobilization, and management of resources. Obi posited that although ECOWAS has remained central to Nigeria's responses to transnational security threats in the sub-region, the country has not been able to match its rhetoric on addressing transnational security threats with far-reaching concrete achievements⁴. The involvement of Nigerians in the illicit trade in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances has gained global attention since the 1980s. Despite punitive measures adopted by various governments to discourage drug trafficking, the involvement of Nigerians in the illicit trade persists. It is argued that drug trafficking will continue to constitute a threat to security and stability within Nigeria so long as the demand for drugs in destination countries and profits from the illicit trade remains attractive while strong social values are widely overlooked in preference to materialism.

Nigeria serves more as a transit route through which cocaine and heroin are trafficked to other countries mostly in Europe and to a minimal extent, the United States. Nigerian drug traffickers usually use air transportation as the means for trafficking prohibited drugs and narcotics substances through Nigeria to target destinations. However, as drug control and anti-narcotic war intensify and arrests of couriers are made by NDLEA personnel at various airports, traffickers sometimes resort to using sea routes and land borders to avert detection. UNIDOC opined that the production, use, and trafficking of illicit drugs pose another danger originating from organized crime in Nigeria. Despite Nigeria's diverse climates that could support the cultivation of various drug crops, cannabis remains the only widely cultivated drug crop. The transborder related crime has various implications on development of Nigerian state including the activities of touts and illegal migrants, illegal lumbering and poaching and host of others. Essentially, security is primarily a preoccupation of the state to protect its sovereignty, territorial integrity, citizen, and their values. It is on the bases that Nigerian.

¹ A. Esan Omobayo, S. M. Ngwira, Isaac Olusegun Osunmakeinde, *Bimodal Biometrics for Financial Infrastructure Security*, "Information Security for South Africa", IEEE, 2013, pp. 1-8

² Aniche Ernest Tooche, Inocent Moyo, Christopher Changwe Nshimbi, *Interrogating the Nexus Between Irregular Migration and Insecurity along 'Ungoverned' border Spaces in West Africa*, "African Security Review", Vol. 30, No. 3, 2021, pp. 304-318

³ Ismail B. Rabi, *Strategies, Challenges, and Options for Effective Responses to Cross-Border Crimes: An Analysis of Nigerian-Cameroon Borders*, "KIU Interdisciplinary Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences", Vol. 3, No. 2, 2022

⁴ Cyril I. Obi, *Nigeria's Foreign Policy and Transnational Security Challenges in West Africa*, "Journal of Contemporary African Studies", Vol. 26, No. 2, 2008, pp. 183-196

The issue of drug trafficking in Nigeria requires a comprehensive and multi-faceted approach. Enhancing the capacity of law enforcement agencies, such as the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), to detect and intercept drug trafficking operations is crucial. This could involve providing them with advanced training and equipment. Drug trafficking is a transnational issue. Therefore, cooperation with international partners, including sharing intelligence and best practices, can be instrumental in tackling this problem. Reviewing and updating existing laws to ensure they are effective in deterring drug trafficking is another important step. This could include imposing stricter penalties for drug trafficking offenses. Conducting public awareness campaigns about the dangers of drug abuse and the legal consequences of drug trafficking can deter potential traffickers and users. Providing support for drug users to overcome their addiction, including access to rehabilitation services, can reduce the demand for illicit drugs. Additionally, efforts should be made to socially reintegrate former drug users to prevent them from returning to drug use. Addressing underlying socio-economic issues that may drive individuals towards drug trafficking, such as poverty and unemployment, is also essential. This could involve implementing policies aimed at job creation and poverty reduction.

Environmental security and the effects of climate change

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) describes climate change as a shift in the climate that can be directly or indirectly attributed to human activity. This shift alters the composition of the global atmosphere and is observed over a comparable period, in addition to natural climatic variability¹. Due to its diverse impacts and far-reaching consequences, climate change is now acknowledged across policy and academic circles as a significant threat to human security. Despite the growing focus on environmental security and the effects of climate change in the region, there has been limited research on its connection to organized criminal activities in the sub-continent. The discourse has primarily centered around migration, extreme weather conditions, and food insecurity. In Nigeria, there is a growing call for more contextualized research on the relevance of climate change to increasing insecurity, particularly in relation to the rising incidence of conflict among groups. Concerns about climate change-conflict linkages stem from the increasing incidence of violent conflict arising from disputes among groups over climate-related declines in the availability of renewable natural resources. The challenges of terrorism and organized crime are escalating. The activities of Boko Haram have severely affected social and economic activities in border communities of Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger Republic, and Chad². This has resulted in a deteriorating humanitarian situation in the Lake Chad Basin with nearly 2.2 million people forcibly displaced in the region¹.

The global food crisis has also seen a marginal increase due to Boko Haram's nefarious activities. Northern Nigeria, known as the "food basket of Africa" for producing and exporting food products such as onions, peppers, yams, potatoes among others, has been negatively affected. Farmers have been scared away by Boko Haram and farms abandoned after locals were threatened with extermination by the terrorists³. Climate change also has other less apparent and indirect consequences that may combine with and exacerbate other challenges thereby undermining security at a broader level⁴.

Piracy and attacks against shipping vessels

Saliu posits that maritime piracy has re-emerged as a global security threat, particularly in the waters off the Horn of Africa and West Africa⁵. However, he notes that security discussions in Nigeria seem to focus more on the activities of militants, banditry, and terrorism, often downplaying the frequent risk of piracy in the

¹ Daniel Bodansky, *The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change: A Commentary*, "Yale J. Int'l L", Vol. 18, 1993, p. 451

² Abdulrasheed Olowoselu, Aishatu Bello, Adaobi Onuselogu, *Historical Analysis of Boko Haram Insurgency on Educational Management in Northern Nigeria*, "Global Journal of Arts Humanities and Social Sciences", Vol 2, No. 10, 2014, pp. 77-83

³ Adeoye O. Akinola, Okeke Uzodike Ufo, *Ubuntu and the Quest for Conflict Resolution in Africa*, "Journal of Black Studies", Vol. 49, No. 2, 2018, pp. 91-113

⁴ Jon Barnett, Neil W. Adger, *Climate Change, Human Security and Violent Conflict*, "Political Geography", Vol. 26, No.6, 2007, pp. 639-655

⁵ Mustapha Saliu, *An Analysis of Youth Deradicalization Programs in Northeast Nigeria: a Study on Boko Haram*, "European Scientific Journal", Vol. 17, No.13, 2021, pp. 21-40

Gulf of Guinea. The escalation of piracy attacks within the Gulf of Guinea has been a significant hindrance to trade and economic activities, contributing to a decline in revenue for the federal government. Majiga highlights that in recent years, there has been a worrying increase in acts of piracy and attacks against shipping vessels on African coastlines¹. Despite various measures taken to prevent piracy, the problem persists. This chapter addresses the issue of piracy by examining its underlying causes and adverse effects and evaluating the effectiveness of current anti-piracy initiatives on the continent. UNODC 2023 alluded to the IMO records that three out of the four maritime offenses, specifically theft, seizure, and abduction, have been significant at various times in Nigeria's recent past. The report statement further revealed that from 1995 to 2010, the majority (71 percent) of documented successful attacks were robberies. In the period between 2011 and 2015, robberies continued to be prevalent, but there was also a rise in hijackings, accounting for approximately 25 percent of recorded successful attacks. Furthermore, from 2016 to 2020, there was a noticeable increase in kidnappings, which constituted 40 percent of recorded successful attacks.

The states in the region lack the technical and logistical capability or the financial resources to counter the threat effectively. In addition, limited regional integration in the maritime sphere creates further concern. However, international initiatives have proven insufficient and ineffective due to most of them primarily addressing the effects of piracy through military means.

According to UNODC, in 2023 there were a total of 203 successful maritime attacks between 2015 and 2021. These attacks can be categorized into different types of crimes, with robbery accounting for 38% of the incidents, theft accounting for 33%, hijacking accounting for 25%, and kidnapping accounting for 4%. Piracy and attacks against shipping vessels have long been challenges for the maritime industry, posing threats to global trade, seafarers' safety, and international security. Pirates, often armed and organized, target commercial vessels in various regions around the world. The causes and consequences of piracy and attacks according to UNODC 2023 is that after the amnesty by President Yar Adua, there was a noticeable increase in the occurrence of hijackings of entire vessels. From 2011 to 2015, approximately 25% of all successful attacks involved the hijacking of vessels. The main objective behind these hijackings was to obtain the cargo, which primarily consisted of oil and fuel. Typically, the hijacked vessels would transfer the fuel to another vessel, often while at sea. It is probable that the increase in hijacking incidents is connected to developments in the oil market, considering that petroleum products have been frequently targeted in these attacks. 1,274 incidents of kidnapping attacks on vessels from 2015 to 2021, the types of vessels most targeted are container ships, accounting for 21% of the incidents. Following closely behind are supply ships at 14%, general cargo ships at 16%, and fishing vessels at 11%. Other types of vessels targeted include bulk carriers, refrigerated cargo carriers, product tankers, LPG tankers, chemical tankers, and oil tankers, each making up a smaller percentage of the incidents. The data, interpreted by the UNODC 2023 from IMO data, provides insight into the preferred targets of kidnapping attacks on vessels. Container ships, which transport a wide range of goods, seem to be the most attractive to kidnappers, possibly due to their high value cargo. Supply ships, general cargo ships, and fishing vessels are also frequently targeted, likely because they are often found in remote or vulnerable areas. The remaining types of vessels, such as bulk carriers and tankers, are targeted to a lesser extent, suggesting that kidnappers may prioritize vessels carrying specific types of cargo.

These initiatives have only managed to reduce the number of attacks and their success rate, while failing to address the underlying reasons for piracy or solve the problems ashore in a sustainable manner. The suggestion that a combination of military and non-military approaches would go a long way in addressing and potentially solving the problem of piracy on the continent is rife. Piracy and attacks against shipping vessels have long been challenges for the maritime industry, posing threats to global trade, seafarers' safety, and international security. Pirates, often armed and organized, target commercial vessels in various regions around the world. This essay will explore the causes and consequences of piracy and attacks against shipping vessels, with a specific focus on the Gulf of Guinea in West Africa.

¹ Majiga Prince Bright, *Combating Piracy in African Waters. In The Palgrave Handbook of Sustainable Peace and Security in Africa*, Cham Springer International Publishing, 2022, pp. 343-364

Oli theft in Nigeria

Umar and Mohammed argued that the pilferage of crude oil in Nigeria constitutes a significant portion, approximately 10%, of the illicit financial outflows originating from the African continent¹. This nefarious activity results in a staggering annual loss of approximately US\$6 billion. Oyefusi noted that the incidence of oil theft in Nigeria has witnessed a marked increase since 2009, which can be attributed to the government's inability to address fundamental concerns and recent developments². This phenomenon underscores the need for a political resolution that fosters a sense of ownership among citizens towards safeguarding oil resources and related infrastructure³. The persistent occurrence of oil theft in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria can be attributed to a confluence of factors including corruption, high rates of youth unemployment, inadequate law enforcement agencies, and collaborations with international criminal networks. These challenges continue to undermine the government's efforts to effectively address this issue.

Soremi observed that the phenomenon of oil theft in the Niger Delta has been attributed to Nigeria's rentier state structure, which has fostered corruption and conflict⁴. The resource curse theory, which is exemplified by the Dutch disease, provides an economic explanation for this phenomenon, and highlights the national-level implications of oil theft, such as reduced revenue, increased unemployment, and the need for economic diversification. He stated further that at the local level, the rentier state structure has led to social implications, including sustained conflict, curtailed social development, and displacement of persons. To address this issue, it is recommended that transparency and accountability be prioritized in the relationships between the government, oil-producing communities, and multinational corporations. This will help to combat the illegal practice of oil theft and promote sustainable development in the Niger Delta region.

Oyefusi opined that the recent increase in oil theft in Nigeria through the lens of ethno political settlement. It argues that while the persistent theft of oil has historically served as a means of facilitating and maintaining a predatory and exclusionary social order, it has now become a tool for challenging the existing establishment¹. The significant surge in oil theft after 2009 can be attributed to the government's failure to effectively utilize the amnesty program to address the underlying issues fueling the conflict in the region. These issues have become even more crucial considering recent events in the country, including the unintended publicity surrounding illegal mining in other areas, the discovery and advancement of oil exploration in other states, revelations about the actual ownership of oil wells, and provocative statements regarding the current resource wealth-sharing formula made by influential figures from different ethno regional groups. Oyefusi further stated that the situation is complicated by the presence of a large number of marginalized and excluded youths who feel neglected by the Jonathan administration, the exposure of widespread corruption in the nation's oil sector, and developments in the political sphere that pose a threat to national unity¹. In response to these challenges, the paper proposes a political settlement that offers incentives for ordinary citizens and host communities in the Niger Delta to actively participate in safeguarding the country's oil and gas resources and infrastructure. By providing these incentives, such as ensuring fair resource distribution and involving local communities in decision-making processes, the proposed settlement aims to foster a sense of ownership and responsibility among the citizens.

In the face of government inability or unwillingness to aggressively combat the menace, old actors have become 'barons' and many more are sucked into the oil theft business due to its lure⁵. It found that the prevalence not only poses serious threat to national security and economy, but also feeds into a wider pattern of criminality in the Gulf of Guinea. It recommends that the illicit enterprise can be dismantled if the Nigerian government aggressively addresses the internal factors propitious to its outbreak and partners with the

¹ Bello Umar, Mohammed Zayyanu, *The Effects of Illicit Financial Flows on Oil and Gas Revenue Generation in Nigeria*, "Journal of Money Laundering Control", Vol. 24, No. 1, 2021, pp. 177-186

² Aderoju Oyefusi, *Oil Bunkering in Nigeria's Post-amnesty Era: An Ethnopolitical Settlement Analysis*, "Ethnopolitics", Vol. 13, No. 4, 2014, pp. 552-545

³ Boris Odalonu, *Happy, Upsurge of Oil Theft and Illegal Bunkering in the Niger Delta Region Of Nigeria: Is There A Way Out?*, "Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences", Vol. 6, No. 3S2, 2015, pp. 343-364

⁴ Soremi Titilayo, *The Implications of Oil Theft on Social and Economic Development in the Niger Delta*, "Global Journal of Social Sciences", Vol 19, 2020, pp. 1-11

⁵ Onuoha Freedom Chukwud, Joachim Chukwuma Okafor, Osinimu Osebeba Femi-Adedayo, *Nigeria, Militancy, Insurgency and the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapon*, "The Palgrave Handbook of Small Arms and Conflicts in Africa", Springer, 2021, pp. 777-802

international community to suppress factors facilitating its persistence. The phenomenon of oil theft and illegal refineries in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria has been a long-standing issue, with its negative economic impact on the national economy and multinational oil companies becoming increasingly apparent after the Presidential proclamation of amnesty in 2009¹. Oil theft and illegal refineries in Nigeria are mainly caused by State and multinational oil company failures in infrastructure development and social responsibility, rather than militants' greed¹. The critical theoretical school which attributes the causes of oil theft and illegal refineries to the failures of the State and multinational oil companies in infrastructural development and social responsibility commitments to the indigenous minority ethnic communities of the Niger Delta region. This is in contrast to the orthodox school, which blames the militants for their "greed not grievance" instincts. The interdiction of oil pipelines in Nigeria exhibits a strong correlation with poverty, displaying notable variations in occurrence patterns across different regions².

Kidnapping and insecurity in Nigeria

The phenomenon of kidnapping has emerged as a highly profitable enterprise in Nigeria in recent years. Initially gaining national attention on 26 February 2006, when Niger Delta militants abducted foreign oil workers to assert their demands, kidnapping has now become pervasive, politicized, and commercialized. Its prevalence has extended beyond the Niger Delta region, permeating every corner of the count. Osumah and Aghedo opined that the act of abduction in Nigeria has evolved into a lucrative enterprise, characterized by substantial financial gains, motivated by economic sustenance, political and commercial benefits, and the government's involvement in the negotiation and regulation of this criminal activity³. Ottuh and Aitufe identified various causes of kidnapping, particularly in relation to economic and political motivations. It also considers the conceptualization of kidnapping as a means of liberation struggle. Factors such as the government's failure to provide essential services, high levels of unemployment, inefficiency, and corruption within the security system are all identified as potential catalysts for this criminal enterprise.

Armed banditry has had a significant impact on education in northwestern Nigeria. The activities of bandits directly affect the seven states of northwestern Nigeria – Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto and Zamfara¹. In the realm of education, banditry is responsible for the abduction and kidnapping of students and teachers, killing of students and teachers, destruction of educational facilities, disruption of academic activities and closure of schools in the affected areas. Mass kidnappings and brutal raids on civilians in vulnerable villages by bandits are driving a humanitarian crisis¹. This has created a deteriorating humanitarian situation in the Lake Chad Basin (Nigeria, Niger, Chad, and Cameroon) with close to 2.2 million people forcibly displaced in the region.

The prevalence of armed banditry in Nigeria appears to have been high and rising over the years. In Nigeria, since 2013, incidents of violence caused by armed bandits have heightened. The menace of banditry is becoming rampant because of high level of unemployment, weak security system, poverty, porosity of Nigeria's borders and arms proliferations which has plunged the region into a state of insecurity in all spheres of life. Therefore, addressing the issue of armed banditry is crucial not only for improving security but also for ensuring the continuity and quality of education in northwestern Nigeria. The phenomenon of ransom-driven kidnappings in Nigeria is predominantly motivated by economic and spatial considerations, yet operates as a highly organized, interrelated, and interdependent system⁴.

According to SB Morgan Nigerians have paid kidnappers an estimated \$18.34 million in ransom between June 2011 and March 2020. Most of this amount, approximately 60%, was paid between January 2016 and March 2020, indicating a significant increase in recent years. An expert interviewed for this report estimated that kidnappers received ransoms exceeding 2 billion naira (\$4.8 million) in 2020. Interviews with

¹ Chukudi Okwelum. *Rights to Oil Theft and Illegal Refinery in Nigeria*, "Scholarly Journal of Advanced Legal Research", Vol 1, No. 4, 2021

² Peter O.O. Ottuh, V. O. Aitufe, *Kidnapping and Moral Society: An Ethico-Religious Evaluation of the Nigerian Experience*, "European Scientific Journal", Vol. 10, No. 14, 2014, pp. 420-434

³ Nnam Macpherson, Mercy Chioma Arua, Mary Sorochi Out, *The Use of Women and Children in Suicide Bombing by the Boko Haram Terrorist Group in Nigeria*, "Aggression and Violent Behavior", Vol. 42, 2018, pp 35-42

⁴ Emanemua Adebowale Bandele, Toyosi Nathaniel Akinlosotu, *Kidnapping for Ransom in Nigeria: Implications and Quest for a Permanent Solution*, "AFRREV IJAH: An International Journal of Arts and Humanities", Vol. 5, No. 2, 2016, pp. 20-27

convicted kidnapers revealed that ransoms per operation ranged from 500,000 to 2 million naira for a single victim. Kidnapping of school children directly affect the seven states of northwestern Nigeria – Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto and Zamfara¹. the abduction and kidnapping of students and teachers, killing of students and teachers, destruction of educational facilities, disruption of academic activities and closure of schools in the affected areas. Mass kidnappings and brutal raids on civilians in vulnerable villages by bandits are driving a humanitarian crisis. This has created a deteriorating humanitarian situation in the Lake Chad Basin (Nigeria, Niger, Chad and Cameroon) with close to 2.2 million people forcibly displaced in the region. In December 2020, 344 schoolboys were kidnapped in Kankara, Katsina State. The government secured their release after six days, but it was reported that a ransom of 30 million naira was paid. In February 2021, 277 schoolgirls were kidnapped in Jangebe, Zamfara State, and they were also released after negotiations with the kidnapers. The government denied paying any ransom. Similar attacks occurred in other states until September 2021, but no mass school kidnappings have been reported since then. In March 2022, the Nigerian Senate passed a bill prohibiting the payment of ransoms, with penalties of up to 15 years for noncompliance.

In March 2022, a train traveling from Abuja to Kaduna in Nigeria was derailed by explosives and attacked by gunmen, resulting in eight deaths and the kidnapping of 65-168 passengers. The Governor of Kaduna State claimed that Boko Haram and bandits were responsible for the attack. Hostages were released as ransom payments were privately negotiated, and the principal negotiator was detained in Cairo and later arrested in Nigeria. The DSS withdrew a suit to prolong his detention in November 2022, and the final 23 hostages were reportedly released without force or payment of ransom in October 2022. Effective governance plays a pivotal role in mitigating the security challenges posed by the rampant occurrence of kidnapping for ransom in Nigeria. The implementation of proactive security measures and timely response mechanisms are essential components of a comprehensive strategy to combat this menace¹. The multifaceted aspects of kidnapping in Nigeria, this paper seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. It underscores the need for a holistic approach in addressing the root causes of kidnapping, to effectively combat this grave social issue.

Terrorism and insecurity in Nigeria

In recent years, Nigeria has experienced an unprecedented level of insecurity and terrorism, marking a significant shift since the advent of the current democratic dispensation. The nature of insecurity has regionalized, with militia groups in the south, insurgency in the north, kidnapping in the east and south, ritual killings in the east and west, and calculated political and non-political assassinations across the nation. This regional pattern of insecurity has led to the formation of regional security structures to curb the alarming rate of insecurity. From the 1980 Maitatsine uprising to the 2009 Boko Haram up-rising, Nigeria has been plagued by ethno-religious conflicts that have resulted in significant human and material losses. The Boko Haram uprising of July 2009 was particularly noteworthy as it not only established a precedent but also reinforced the efforts of Islamic conservative elements to impose a variant of Islamic religious ideology on a secular state^{Error!}
Reference source not found.

The religious sensitivity of Nigerians provided a conducive environment for the emergence of the Boko Haram sect, which was further fueled by the prevailing economic dislocation in Nigerian society, the advent of party politics, and the desperation of politicians for political power^{Error! Bookmark not defined.}. The ambivalence of some vocal Islamic leaders also contributed to the sect's growth, as they either did nothing to prevent it from fomenting or only weakly condemned it. These internal factors, combined with the rise of Islamic fundamentalism worldwide, have created a highly volatile Nigerian society that is prone to violence, as evidenced by the Boko Haram uprising. Given the Nigerian state's approach to religious conflict, this violence may persist as a recurring problem.

Boko Haram's activities have been particularly severe between 2008 and 2015 (Oyeleye, 2016), with recurrent attacks leading to loss of lives, destruction of property, population displacements, and other forms of aggression. These terrorist activities have not only disrupted peace and stability but also significantly impacted

¹ Abimbola Adesoji, *The Boko Haram Uprising and Islamic Revivalism in Nigeria*, "Africa Spectrum", Vol. 45, No. 2, 2010, pp. 95-108

socio-economic development in the affected regions. The rise of Boko Haram has been attributed to various factors, including socio-economic disparities, political instability, religious extremism, and weak governance structures. The group's ideology is rooted in a rejection of Western education and values, which it views as corrupting influences on society.

The phenomenon of Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria can be attributed to religious identity and the perception of relative deprivation, thereby underscoring the imperative for heightened security measures and national cohesion within the country¹. The impact of Boko Haram's activities extends beyond immediate violence and loss of life. The group's attacks have disrupted education, healthcare services, and economic activities in affected areas. Schools have been targeted for attacks, leading to closures and interruptions in education for thousands of children. Healthcare facilities have also been attacked or abandoned due to insecurity, limiting access to essential health services for local populations. Economically, Boko Haram's activities have led to a decline in agricultural production due to insecurity in rural areas. This has contributed to food insecurity and increased dependence on food aid in affected regions. Moreover, the insecurity has deterred local and foreign investment, further undermining economic development².

In response to these challenges, the Nigerian government has implemented various counter-terrorism measures. These include military operations against Boko Haram, strengthening intelligence capabilities, and promoting deradicalization and reintegration programs for former Boko Haram members. However, these efforts have been hampered by challenges such as corruption, lack of coordination among security agencies, and inadequate resources. The Nigerian government's deradicalization program faces structural weaknesses, potentially contributing to violent extremism, and requires strengthening measures for a successful counter-terrorism operation. The issue of terrorism in Nigeria requires a comprehensive approach that goes beyond military measures. This includes addressing underlying socio-economic issues that fuel extremism, strengthening governance structures, promoting religious tolerance and interfaith dialogue, improving access to quality education and economic opportunities, and enhancing regional cooperation in counter-terrorism efforts.

Epidemic of violent killings and insecurity in Nigeria

The Cables on May 2, 2023, reported that between January 1 and April 30, a total of 1,228 individuals lost their lives in Nigeria. Among the fatalities, 1,074 were unarmed Nigerians, 68 were vigilantes, 50 were police officers, 20 were soldiers, 10 were officers of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), 3 were immigration officers, 2 were security guards, and 1 was an officer of the vehicle inspection service. The number of killings has been steadily increasing month by month, with the highest death toll reported in April (441 fatalities). Benue recorded the highest number of casualties (232), while Akwa Ibom and Jigawa had the lowest with 2 reported deaths each. In terms of abductions, a total of 844 people were kidnapped during the same period. Zamfara had the highest number of cases with 211 reported incidents, while Bauchi, Ekiti, and Oyo had the lowest with 1 recorded abduction each.

The security officers were also killed across the country, a total of 186 security operatives, including military personnel, members of the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps, the Vigilante Group of Nigeria, and the Nigeria Police Force, have tragically lost their lives while carrying out their duties. These statistics were obtained from news reports spanning from January to September 2023. The states where these incidents have occurred most frequently are Zamfara, Niger, Borno, Delta, Imo, Anambra, Benue, and Enugu, among others. This alarming trend of violence, with the perpetrators remaining at large, only serves to embolden them. It is imperative that a strong and forceful response is taken against these non-state actors. Without decisive action, the current strategies implemented by security agencies will not be sufficient to deter such acts.

The Punch Newspaper on 25 December 2023, reported that the alarming levels of violence and insecurity in Plateau State, Nigeria. Despite government interventions, including a presidential order and a special military operation, the attacks continue unabated. The recurring nature of these incidents underscores the need for urgent and comprehensive measures to address the root causes of violence and ensure the safety and security of the residents. The escalating violence and insecurity in Plateau State, Nigeria, pose a significant

¹ Daniel Agbibo, *Living in Fear: Religious Identity, Relative Deprivation and the Boko Haram Terrorism*, "African Security", Vol. 6, No. 2, 2013, pp. 153-170

² Ahmad Muhammad Baballe, et. al., *Need for Security Alarm System Installation and Their Challenges Faced*, "International Journal of New Computer Architectures and their Applications", Vol. 9, No. 3 Vol, 2019, pp. 68-76

threat to the lives and well-being of its residents. There is urgent need for a multi-faceted approach to address the root causes of violence, strengthen security measures, and promote peacebuilding initiatives. The government, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, must prioritize the safety and security of the residents and work towards sustainable solutions to prevent future occurrences of violence in Plateau State.

Conclusion

These conflicts require a comprehensive understanding of their complexities and their impact on state stability. Conflict resolution strategies in Africa, including Nigeria, must consider these factors. This involves addressing the root causes of conflicts such as poverty, unemployment, inequality, corruption, weak institutions among others. There is a need for capacity building for security agencies. This includes training in modern security techniques, provision of modern equipment, improving welfare for security personnel among others. There is also a need for community engagement in security matters. Communities should be involved in identifying security threats and finding solutions. In addressing security challenges in Nigeria requires a holistic approach that takes into consideration the complexities of these challenges and their impact on state stability. It involves not only strengthening security agencies but also addressing socio-economic issues that fuel these challenges.

Achieving peace and stability in Nigeria requires effective conflict resolution mechanisms and inclusive economic and political strategies aimed at improving the living conditions of the majority of the population.

In addition, Nigeria needs to manage Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) through national action, implementation of treaties, and strengthened international cooperation. The aspiration is that if Nigeria can effectively address the issue of SALW, it will create conditions conducive to realizing its socio-economic goals for the betterment of its people.

Recommendations

1. Invest in modern security infrastructure and technology to enhance the capacity of security agencies. This includes surveillance systems, intelligence gathering tools, and advanced training for security personnel.

2. Collaborate with neighboring countries to share intelligence and coordinate counter-terrorism efforts. Regional cooperation is crucial in tackling transnational threats like terrorism and armed banditry.

3. Implement policies aimed at reducing poverty, unemployment, and inequality. Socio-economic development can address some of the root causes of extremism and armed banditry.

4. Invest in quality education and promote moderate religious teachings to counter extremist ideologies. Education can provide youths with alternatives to joining extremist groups.

5. Enhance governance structures and ensure the rule of law to address grievances that may fuel extremism. This includes tackling corruption, promoting transparency, and ensuring accountability in public institutions.

6. Enhance border security to prevent illegal cross-border activities such as smuggling of arms, which often fuel insecurity. This includes strengthening cooperation with neighboring countries on border management.

7. Implement peacebuilding initiatives that promote dialogue and reconciliation in conflict-affected areas. This includes supporting community-based conflict resolution mechanisms.

8. Support Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) Programs: Support DDR programs for former members of extremist groups and armed bandits. These programs can help reintegrate former combatants into society and prevent them from returning to violence. Addressing insecurity and terrorism requires a comprehensive approach that involves all sectors of society, including government, security forces, civil society, religious leaders, and communities.

Bibliography

Books

1. Grant, Guy Lamb, *Disarmament: A Basic Guide* (4th ed.), United Nations Publications, 2013
2. Morten, Børås; Dunn, Kevin C., (Eds.), *African Guerrillas: Raging Against the Machine*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, London, 2007

3. Muggah, Robert; Batchelor, Peter, *Development Held Hostage: Assessing the Effects of Small Arms on Human Development*. UNDP, 2002
4. Nicolas, Florquin; Berman, Eric, G., (Eds.), *Armed and Aimless: Armed Groups, Guns and Human Security in the Ecowas Region*, Small Arms Survey, Geneva, 2005
5. Opongo, Elias, O., *Enhancing Conflict Resolution in Africa in the Palgrave Handbook of Sustainable Peace and Security in Africa*, Cham Springer International Publishing, 2022
6. Owen, Greene; Marsh, Nic, *Small Arms, Crime and Conflict*, Routledge Taylor&Francis Group, London and New York , 2011
7. Parker, Richard Guy; Sommer, Marni, (Eds.) *Routledge Handbook of Global Public Health*, Routledge, 2011
8. Stohl, Rachel; Ernstgendoorn, E.J., *Stopping the Destructive Spread of Small Arms: How Small Arms and Light Weapons Proliferation Undermines Security and Development*, Center for American Progress, Washington, 2010

Articles and Studies

1. Adesoji, Abimbola, *The Boko Haram Uprising And Islamic Revivalism in Nigeria*, "Africa Spectrum", Vol. 45, No. 2, 2010
2. Agbiboa, Daniel Egieba, *Living in Fear: Religious Identity, Relative Deprivation and the Boko Haram Terrorism*, "African Security", Vol. 6, No. 2, 2013
3. Agunloye, Adeniji, *Urban Transport Challenges in Nigeria: The Need for a Paradigm Shift*, "Journal of Transport and Supply Chain Management", Vol. 11, No. 1, 2017
4. Aishatu Bello, Abdulrasheed, Olowoselu; Onuselogu, Adaobi, *Historical Analysis of Boko Haram Insurgency on Educational Management in Northern Nigeria*, "Global Journal of Arts Humanities and Social Sciences", Vol. 2, No. 10, 2014
5. Akinola, Adeoye O.; Uzodike, Ufo Okeke, *Ubuntu and the Quest for Conflict Resolution in Africa*, "Journal of Black Studies", Vol. 49, No. 2, 2018
6. Akinwumi, Oyeyinka, *Transportation Infrastructure and Economic Development in Nigeria*, "Journal of Transport Geography", Vol. 74, 2019
7. Baballel, Ahmad Muhammad, et. al., *Need for Security Alarm System Installation and Their Challenges Faced*, "International Journal of New Computer Architectures and their Applications", Vol. 9, No. 3 Vol, 2019
8. Bandele, Emanemua Adebowale; Akinlosotu, Toyosi Nathaniel, *Kidnapping for Ransom in Nigeria: Implications and Quest for a Permanent Solution*, "AFRREV IJAH: An International Journal of Arts and Humanities", Vol. 5, No. 2, 2016
9. Barnett, Jon; Adger, Neil, W., *Climate Change, Human Security and Violent Conflict*, "Political Geography", Vol. 26, No.6, 2007
10. Bello, Ismail; Bello, Rabi, *Strategies, Challenges, and Options for Effective Responses to Cross-Border Crimes: An Analysis of Nigerian-Cameroon Borders*, "KIU Interdisciplinary Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences", Vol. 3, No. 2, 2022
11. Bodansky, Daniel, *The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change: A Commentary*, "Yale J. Int'l l", Vol. 18, 1993
12. Bright, Majiga, Prince, *Combating Piracy in African Waters*, "Palgrave Handbook of Sustainable Peace and Security in Africa", Cham Springer International Publishing, 2022
13. Chávez, Kerry; Swed, Ori, *Conflict Contagion via Weapons Proliferation Out of Collapsed States*, "Small Wars&Insurgencies", Vol. 35, No. 2, 2024
14. Chukwud, Onuoha Freedom; Okafor, Joachim Chukwuma; Femi-Adedayo, Osinimu Osebeba, *Nigeria, Militancy, Insurgency and the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapon*, "The Palgrave Handbook of Small Arms and Conflicts in Africa", Springer, 2021
15. Cyril, Obi, *Nigeria's Foreign Policy and Transnational Security Challenges in West Africa*, "Journal of Contemporary African Studies", Vol. 26, No. 2, 2008
16. Esan, Omobayo, A.; Ngwira, S., M.; Osunmakinde, Isaac Olusegun, *Bimodal Biometrics for Financial Infrastructure Security*, "Information Security for South Africa", 2013

17. Iwundu, Charles Okechukwu; Thom-Utoya Blessing, *Security Challenges as Threats to National Unity in Nigeria: Causes, Prevention and Treatment*. Security Challenges, Vol. 14, 2013
18. Macpherson, Nnam; Chioma, Mercy Arua; Sorochi, Out Mary, *The Use of Women and Children in Suicide Bombing by the Boko Haram Terrorist Group in Nigeria*, "Aggression and Violent Behavior", Vol, 42, 2018
19. Odalonu, Boris Happy, *Upsurge of Oil Theft and Illegal Bunkering in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria: Is There a Way Out?*, "Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences", Vol. 6, No. 3S2, 2015
20. Okwelum, Chukudi, *Rights to Oil Theft and Illegal Refinery in Nigeria*, "Scholarly Journal of Advanced Legal Research", Vol. 1, No. 4, 2021
21. Omotuyi, Sunday, *The Burden of Borders: Reassessing the Impacts of Nigeria's Border Closure on the National Security*, "African Security", Vol. 15, No. 3, 2022
22. Ottuh, Peter O.; Aitufe, V. O., *Kidnapping and Moral Society: An Ethico-Religious Evaluation of the Nigerian Experience*, "European Scientific Journal", Vol. 10, No. 14, 2014
23. Oyefusi, Aderoju, *Oil Bunkering in Nigeria's Post-amnesty Era: An Ethnopolitical Settlement Analysis* "Ethnopolitics", Vol. 13, No. 4, 2014
24. Salau, Ogezi Salau; Nasiru, Yusuf, *Latent Causes and Magnitude of Farmers-Herder Agricultural Resource Conflicts that has Formed the New Wave of Conflict in Nigeria*, "Asian Journal of Agricultural Extension, Economics&Sociology", 2022
25. Salihu, Mustapha, *Analysis of Youth Deradicalization Programs in Northeast Nigeria: a Study on Boko Haram*, "European Scientific Journal", Vol. 17, No.13, 2021
26. Sofiri, Joab Peterside, *Nigeria's Contemporary Security Challenges: Herders–Farmers Conflict and Banditry*, "Crisis 10", No. 17, 2020
27. Titilayo, Soremi, *The Implications of Oil Theft on Social and Economic Development in the Niger Delta*, "Global Journal of Social Sciences", Vol. 19, 2020
28. Toochi, Aniche Ernest; Moyo, Innocent; Nshimbi, Christopher Changwe, *Interrogating the Nexus Between Irregular Migration and Insecurity along 'Ungoverned' Border Spaces in West Africa*, "African Security Review", Vol. 30, No. 3, 2021
29. Umar, Bello; Zayyanu, Mohammed, *The Effects of Illicit Financial Flows on Oil and Gas Revenue Generation in Nigeria*, "Journal of Money Laundering Control", Vol. 24, No. 1, 2021

Documents

1. African Union Commission, *Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want*, 2015
2. Council of Foreign Relations, *Nigeria's Insecurity Problem: Causes and Solutions*, February 12, 2021
3. *Small Arms Survey 2019: Global Estimates of Civilian Held Firearms*, Geneva, 2019
4. United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Report 2020-the Next Frontier: Human Development and the Anthropocene*, 2020
5. World Bank, *Nigeria Transport Sector Diagnostic, 2019*
6. World Bank, *Nigeria: Transport sector note, 2018*