Understanding and Tackling Insecurity in Nigeria

Understanding and Tackling Insecurity in Nigeria

AGORA
POLICY

With Support of   MacArthur
Foundation

Cover Photo: Namnso Ukpanah
www.unsplash.com

Acknowledgement

List of Acronyms

ACLED-   Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project

ADR –   Alternative Dispute Resolution

API –   African Polling Institute

BH -   Boko Haram

BZM –   Biafra Zionist Movement

CJTF –   Civilian Joint Task Force

CPS-   Citizens Perception Survey

DIA-   Defence Intelligence Agency

DICON –   Defence Industry Corporation

DSS-   Department of State Services

ESN -   Eastern Security Network

FCT –   Federal Capital Territory

FG –   Federal Government

IDP –   Internally Displaced Persons

IEDs-   Improvised Explosive Devices

IMN –   Islamic Movement in Nigeria

IPCR –   Institute of Peace and Conflict Resolution

IPOB -   Indigenous People of Biafra

ISA-   Intelligence Service Act

ISWAP-   Islamic State West African Province

JAS -   Jamatu Ahli Al-Sunna lil Da'wa Wal Jihad

LUA –   Land Use Act

MASSOB – Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra

MDAs -   Ministries Departments and Agencies

MIDAS –   Migration Information and Data Analysis System

MNJTF -   Multinational Joint Task Force

NBC-   National Boundary Commission

NBS –   National Bureau of Statistics

NCCSALW-   National Centre for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons

NCS-   Nigerian Custom Service

NDLF-   Niger Delta Liberation Front

NEITI –   Nigerian Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative

NIMASA -   Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency

NIS –   Nigerian Immigration Service

NLTP –   National Livestock Transformation Plan

NPF –   Nigerian Police Force

NSCDC-   National Security and Civil Defence Corps

NSCI –   Nigerian Social Cohesion Index

ONSA –   Office of the National Security Adviser

PBIED-   Person Borne Improvised Explosive Device

SALWs -   Small Arms and Light Weapons

SDSSR –   Strategic National Defence and Security Sector Review

SMEDAN- Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria

U.S –   United States

UNHCR-   United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNODC-   United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

VBIED -   Vehicle Borne Improvised Explosive Device

Contents

Executive Summary

Nigeria is currently battling generalised insecurity. With hardly any of its six geo-political zones spared from one form of insecurity or the other, Africa's most populous country and erstwhile bulwark of stability in West Africa is now practically under the gun on all fronts. The dispersed and growing insecurity in Nigeria, despite the best efforts of the gallant members of the country's security forces and increased budgetary provisions, will clearly play very high in the minds of politicians and voters as Nigeria approaches the landmark 2023 elections. Also at issue are a host of election-related concerns: whether elections will hold in some of the flashpoints; whether there will be adequate security in place to ensure the conduct of free, fair and credible polls; and how the outcome of the elections could impact post-election stability in the country.

For the current and future administrations in Nigeria, tackling growing insecurity is, thus a critical and urgent task. It is of utmost existential significance to the citizens and the state itself. Without adequate security, the citizens cannot optimise their potentials. And with expanding insecurity, both the capacity and the legitimacy of the state get eroded. Securing life and property still remains the primary responsibility of the state and the state enjoying the monopoly of violence remains the only safeguard against descent to anarchy. So, more than at any of the previous six general elections in the Fourth Republic, the state of security will be a major issue in the 2023 elections precisely because almost all parts of the country have been drawn into the frontlines. The theatre of insecurity is no longer restrict to the North East, where admittedly some progress has been made against Boko Haram and its splinter groups.

For example, the cumulative effect of the generalised insecurity is that the fear among Nigerians is palpable as nowhere seems immune. This is especially so in rural areas which bear a heavier brunt, given the somewhat regular rate those areas are besieged. The debilitating security challenges are already also taking a toll on economic activities, particularly with regard to commerce and agriculture. The adverse effect is also felt in the education sector in many parts of the country. This is in addition to the humanitarian crisis occasioned by mass displacements in states burdened by security challenges.

The unending sit-at-home order enforced by members of the Eastern Security Network (ESN), the armed wing of the Indigenous Peoples of Biafra (IPOB), is negatively affecting trade in an area noted for its vibrant commercial activities. Further crackdown on such lawful business activities will drastically reduce individual and government revenue, thus fueling poverty and its attendant consequences, especially in the worst affected states of Anambra and Imo. The continued debasement of state legitimacy will embolden criminals and ultimately lead to the creation of a state within a state.

In the North-West and North-Central, the sacking of hundreds of farming communities will further exacerbate the looming spectre of hunger and starvation in a country with the second largest burden of malnourished children in the world. The rapid spread of ISWAP cells, if untamed, could give the Islamic State an opportunity to turn Nigeria into the new Syria. The North Central, South West, and South South are equally burdened by growing insecurity in different forms.

The electioneering and transition period provides a most auspicious moment to contend with both the security situation and the ways out. Expectedly, there would be clashes of prescriptions on how to tackle this growing menace to all Nigerians. The starting point for this paper is the need for a clear understanding of the nature and the drivers of insecurity in Nigeria and, consequently, the imperative of grounding solutions in such a nuanced understanding.

To arrive at such an understanding, the paper examines the major forms of insecurity in the six geo-political zones of the country, sketching their histories and dimensions, and mapping how they imperil life and property, magnify fault-lines, and hinder economic growth and national development. The key security challenges identified are: terrorism, banditry, herders-farmers/communal clashes, insurgency, militancy, ethnic agitations/separatism, and religious fundamentalism. The list is not exhaustive but these are the main ones. While some of these forms of insecurity are new, some have a long history, with some actually predating colonialism (for example, banditry in the current North West geo-political zone of the country). The lines separating these categories are sometimes blurred, as the actors operate across lines, mutating from one category to the other, adopting similar modes of operation, and sometimes joining forces.

As part of the process of gaining a deeper understanding of the growing security problem in Nigeria, the researchers explored the drivers and triggers of insecurity in the country. The researchers relied on secondary data and they employed descriptive and analytical lenses. They identified eleven factors which provide the environment for insecurity to start and fester. The identified drivers of insecurity are:

🔒	Ineffective and inadequate security architecture;	👤	Agitations for resource control;
🔗	Ineffective and insufficient criminal justice system;	🌿	Easy access to illicit drugs;
☞	Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons;	〰	Presence of porous borders;
🧍	Prevalence of poverty and unemployment;	🤲	Multiplication of socio-political and economic grievances;
🌍	Impact of climate change;	📜	Poor land use policies; and
		🏛	Failure to address structural/constitutional deficiencies.

Hardly does a conflict or a source of insecurity have just one trigger. Here too, there could be considerable overlap or interaction among many triggers.

In addition to identifying the factors that drive or trigger conflicts and insecurity, the paper also classified the different ways in which insecurity manifests in Nigeria. Some

Troops Clear Terrorists Haven in Lake Chad Fringes, Commence Op Karya Gwuiwa

Photo credit: The Nigerian Army

Map of Generalised and Dispersed Insecurity
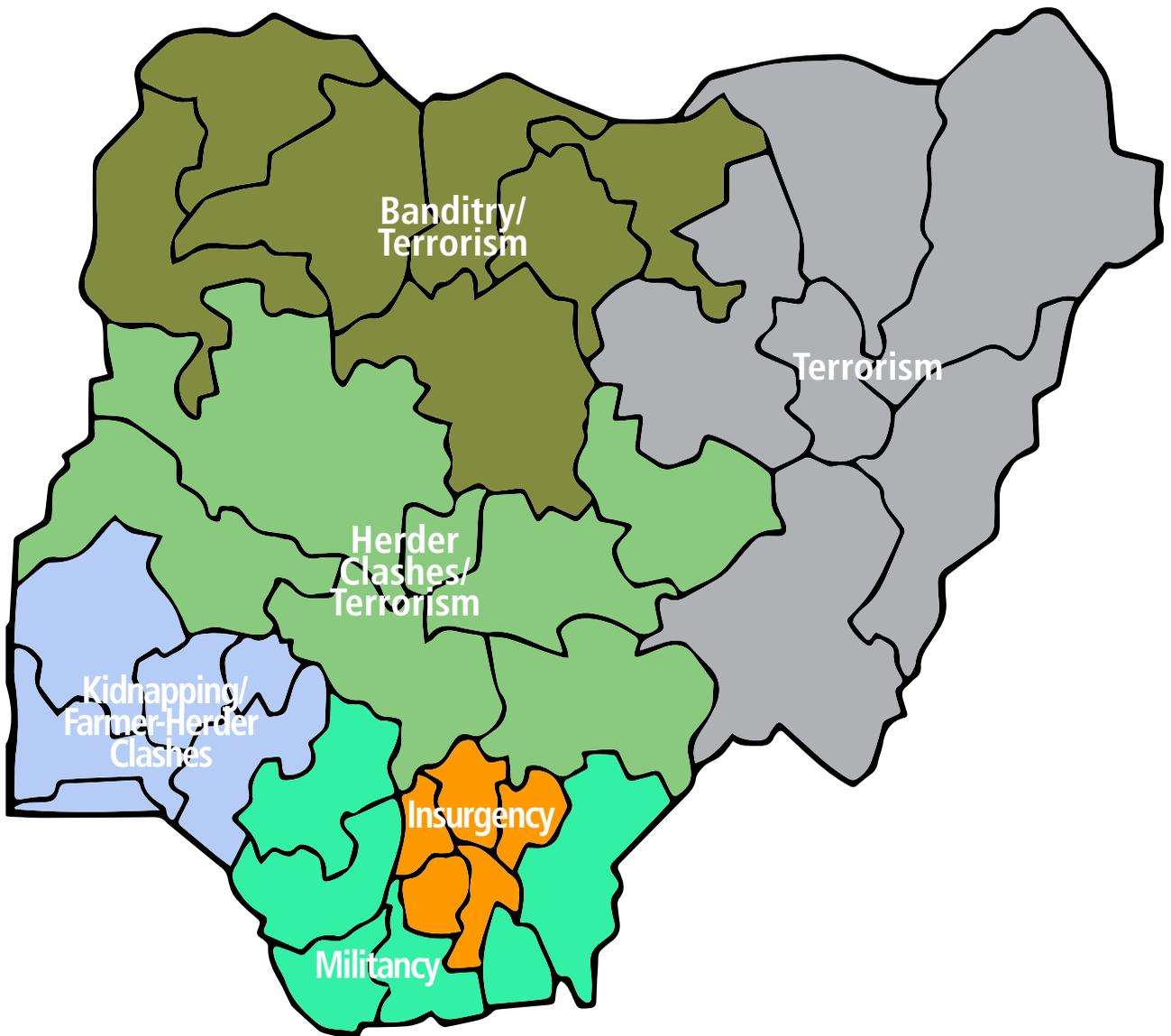
North East: Terrorism

North West: Banditry/Terrorism

North Central: Farmer-Herder Clashes/Terrorism

South East: **Insurgency**

South South: **Militancy**

South West: Kidnapping/
Farmer-Herder Clashes

of the manifestations are: 1) Kidnapping/mass abduction; 2) Serial/ritual killings; 3) Pipeline vandalism/oil theft; 4) Destruction of farmlands; 5) Increased use of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs); 6) Proliferation of irregular security outfits.

The utility of this approach is simple: insecurity in Nigeria is multi-dimensional. As such, for any attempt at addressing the growing menace to be effective and sustainable, it needs to be holistic, deftly combining 'hard', military solutions with 'soft' approaches aimed at tackling the socio-economic underpinnings of conflict and crime. The recommendations for addressing insecurity in Nigeria include the following: Reforming the defence and security sector; Prioritising dialogue and soft-approach to conflict resolution; Increasing the deployment of strategic communications; Reviewing and updating the Land Use Act and other extant laws and policies; Strengthening judicial and legislative responses; Strengthening border security; Reviewing the operation of the National Boundary Commission; Constructively engaging unemployed and unskilled youths through education and vocational training; Regulating irregular security outfits across the country; and controlling the traffic in and access to small arms and light weapons.

Underpinning these recommendations are certain conclusions. The conclusions are that addressing the myriad of security challenges facing Nigeria will require:

1.
Greater attention to the drivers of insecurity by all tiers of government as well as greater coordination and collaboration among different tiers of government on efforts aimed at tackling the drivers of insecurity;

2.
Greater coordination and synergy among the armed forces, the security MDAs, and the intelligence community to address apparent lapses in coordination and collaboration;

3.
Deft combination of enhanced boots-on-the-ground options with improved conflict-resolution and hearts-and-minds approach, as insecurity in Nigeria cannot be surmounted by military options alone;

4.
Improvement in accountability and consequence management within the security sector; and

5.
Alignment of the security sector with the prevailing security challenges in the country in terms training, orientation, resourcing, and inclusion.

The report consists of four major sections. First, there is an analysis of the current security challenges in Nigeria. This section gives an overview of the state of insecurity in Nigeria by identifying the threat factors and their impact on the security sector. Second, the report examines the issues that drive insecurity and emphasizes, quite clearly, that understanding these drivers is a necessary precondition for an improved policy approach. Third, the report identifies and explains the manifestation of insecurity. Finally, the report provides a list of recommendations split along these timescales: short, medium, and long terms. It also outlines the various MDAs that should be saddled with the responsibility and implementation schedule.

Allowing the prevailing security challenges to fester will hasten Nigeria's slide to the league of failed states similar to the circumstances in Iraq and Syria. The preponderance of groups with territorial ambitions means increased threat to the territorial integrity of the country. The proposed multi-sectoral and multi-dimensional approaches to addressing insecurity in Nigeria in this paper are targeted at blocking structural gaps that drive insecurity. The paper concludes on a hopeful note: if the necessary measures are employed in time and place, insecurity will be well addressed, if not totally eradicated.
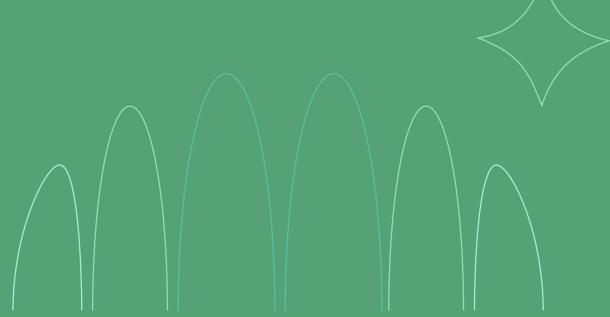
1 Introduction And Methodology

1. Introduction And Methodology

1.1 Introduction

Nigeria's security challenges have persisted, threatening the country's corporate existence. While some of these difficulties predate the establishment of modern Nigeria[1], many more have emerged in recent years, exacerbating the country's conflict environment. Many contemporary forms of insecurity are directly related to socioeconomic and political inequalities, while others may be traced to ethno-religious crises, perceived marginalisation, as well as actual and perceived injustice. Therefore, multiple factors have contributed to the intractable nature of security concerns.

Multiple types of instability exist throughout the six geopolitical zones, jeopardising the country's stability and widening its fault lines. Bandits continue to rule communities in the rural areas in parts of North-West and North-Central zones, which have the unflattering label "ungoverned spaces", owing to lack of government's presence. Separatist agitation is common in the South-East, manifesting itself in attacks on government institutions and the killing of citizens deemed to be not too sympathetic to the secessionist cause. Because of the Boko Haram insurgency, the North-East has been a battleground for almost a decade. Despite the split of the original group into ISWAP, JAS and Ansaru[2], lethal activities of the terrorists continue, resulting in abductions, murder, devastation, and grave humanitarian catastrophe.

The Jihadists have spread their tentacles to the formerly bandit-infested North-West. Thus, a partnership between jihadists and bandits is rapidly taking root, resulting in ransacking of towns, food instability, and widespread displacement.

The North-Central, also known as the Middle Belt, is home to an avalanche of ethno-religious confrontations, herder-farmer conflict, and growing terrorist acts because of expansionist agenda of some of the terrorist groups. The South-South is still a hotbed for militancy resulting in economic sabotage of the mainstay in Nigeria's economy — crude oil; while the South-West is witnessing a rise in ritual killings, cultism, and increased herder-farmer clashes.

The nature, pattern and trend of security challenges confronting Nigeria cannot be dealt with efficiently using military power alone. In reaction to the security challenges across the country, the Federal

Insecurity in the six geo-political zones

---

[1] Present day issues such as inter-communal clashes and farmer-herder conflicts have long been with us, as is the case in many agrarian communities in human history. Banditry, in some form, also pre-dated modern Nigeria, especially in eastern part of old Sokoto (parts of present-day Zamfara and Sokoto states)

[2] What is termed as Boko Haram today began as the Jama'atu Ahlu Sunnah Lid Da'awati wal Jihad (English: People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad). Two splinter groups later emerged from it: First, Jama'atu Ansarul Muslimina fi Bilad as-Sudan (commonly known as Ansaru; English: Vanguard for the Protection of Muslims in Black Africa) and, later on, Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP).

Government and state governments have continued to institute kinetic and non-kinetic actions to stem the trends. Through the military and other security agencies, the federal government has conducted security operations in all the thirty-six states of the federation and established task forces specifically to deal with insurgency, armed banditry, and militancy in the North East, North Central, North West and Niger Delta.

In addition, the Federal Government sought international collaboration through the Multinational Task Force to combat insurgency while creating non-kinetic engagements such as humanitarian operation and Operation Safe Corridor to encourage defection within the ranks of the insurgents. Establishment of the Niger Delta Development Commission and, the North East Development Commission, and the Amnesty Programme are parts of the soft approaches the Federal Government embarked upon to ameliorate the effects of insecurity in Nigeria. At the sub-national level, some state governments have enacted various legislations to prescribe stiffer punishment for kidnapping and associated crimes, and open grazing as a way of stemming persistent farmers/herders' clashes. Some state governments established security networks to complement efforts of regular security forces, while others went into dialogues with armed groups to broker peace deals.

The purpose of this policy paper is to analyse the many facets of the drivers and manifestations of insecurity in Nigeria and to make policy recommendations towards finding solutions to the multi-dimensional challenges.

1.2 Methodology

The methodology used for this report is descriptive and analytic in nature. Statistics, graphs, and maps are used to depict patterns and trends of insecurity issues and their severity across the country. Also, the security challenges are examined based on issues rather than their geolocation. The aim is to create room for broader description and analysis of issues especially where they cut across geo-graphical locations.

Data for this report was sourced from secondary sources such as accounts of prominent personalities and expert reports on the nature, patterns, and trends of insecurity issues in Nigeria. The essence of the methodology is to aid better understanding of the issues discussed therein.

1.2.1 Limitation And Constraints

In preparing this report, given the limitations of space, we concentrated on the security challenges regarded as the most significant. Some of the security challenges predate Nigeria's independence. Any attempt to address all these challenges would have rendered the report too voluminous for the desired purpose.

Given the exigency of the issue at stake, only the most critical (and broad) issues could be accommodated in a report of this nature. However, the desired purpose is accomplished through a detailed account of the essential elements of the most critical challenges.

Abuja-Kaduna train attacked by terrorists on 28 March 2022
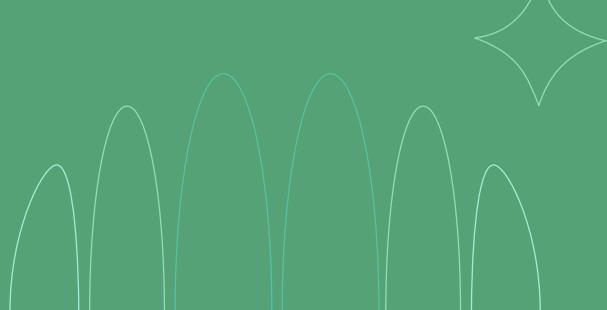
2 Background to Insecurity in Nigeria

2. Background to Insecurity in Nigeria

2.1 Insecurity Issues

Nigeria's security challenges range from terrorism/insurgency, armed banditry, militancy, cultism and ethnic agitations to religious fundamentalism, herder-farmer clashes, and inter-communal clashes. Also, cases of armed robbery, various forms of transnational crimes, gangsterism, and periodic electoral violence pervade the country's landscape, with deleterious effects on the cultural, economic, social, and political well-being of the people and the country.

2.1.1 Terrorism

Terrorism is an unconventional form of warfare aimed at destabilising, disorganising, or replacing the existing political order. An insurgency is a protracted political-military struggle directed toward subverting or displacing the legitimacy of a constituted government or occupying power and completely or partially controlling the resources of a territory using irregular military forces and illegal political organisations. The difference between terrorism and insurgency is rather blurred, because insurgents ometimes employ terrorist tactics to achieve their aims.

Terrorist groups such as Boko Haram, which literally means "western education is a sin", and their splinter group, Islamic States of West African Province (BH/ISWAP), have remained Nigeria's gravest security threats for over a decade.

The threat initially existed primarily in the North-East of Nigeria, particularly in Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa states. It had varying degrees of manifestation in several other states of the federation, with a recent expansion to parts of North-Central and North-West. There are indications that the groups are expanding into South-West Nigeria following a recent attack in Owo, Ondo State, which has been attributed to ISWAP. The Boko Haram insurgency is traceable to 2003 in Geidam Forest, Yobe State, where a group of youths known at the time as the "Nigerian Taliban' sporadically attacked security officials and installations to steal weapons. They also attacked isolated communities to instil fear in the local populace.

However, the threat escalated in 2009 when their leader, Mohammed Yusuf, was killed by the police in Maiduguri. Yusuf's death paved the way for the emergence of the more elusive and unpredictable leader, Abubakar Shekau. Some of the tactics employed by BH/ISWAP are suicide bombing, Person-Borne/Vehicle-Borne Improvised Explosives (PBIED/VBIED), arson, animal rustling, kidnapping/mass abduction of school children, armed robbery, attacks on military/security officials and installations, attacks on isolated communities, farmlands, and markets to steal farm produce, media propaganda and advocacy, jailbreaks, and forced enlistment/recruitment of combatants, among others.

Terrorism   **Banditry**   **Cultism**   **Oil Theft**
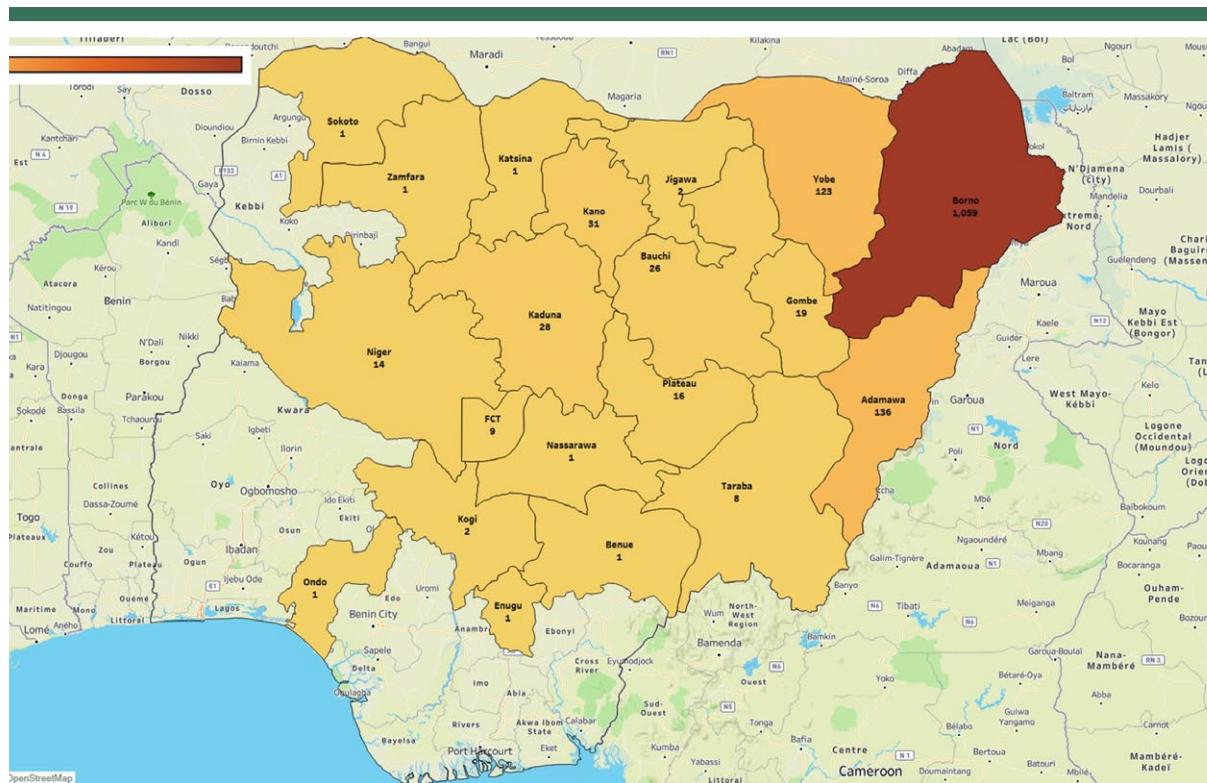
Figure 1: On the map, terrorism-affected states and locations in Nigeria are indicated by varying-sized red-and-black circles that represent the number of incidents from 2009 to 2022. Attacks by terrorists have moved away from the North East geopolitical zone and toward the North West, North Central, and South West. For Jihadist organisations, the "Southbound" expansionist objective continues to be a top priority. Source: ACLED Data

According to the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), between July 2009 and August 2022, BH/ISWAP carried out 1,480 attacks, resulting in the estimated deaths of 15,111 people and the displacement of over 3.2 million Nigerians (UNHCR Africa). At the peak of their activities, BH/ISWAP controlled 26 local government areas in three states in the North-East: fourteen, seven and five local government areas in Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe states respectively. They later extended their activities to parts of Kogi, Nasarawa, Kaduna, Kano, Plateau, Niger and Sokoto states as well as the FCT where they attacked government installations, worship centres, recreation areas, motor parks and other densely populated areas. The objective of BH/ISWAP is to topple the current system and establish their own territories governed according to their strict interpretation of the Sharia law.

To fund their operations, recruit members, and purchase weapons and communication gadgets, Boko Haram has employed tactics such as kidnapping for ransom and cross border cash smuggling. The Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) focused its response on the terrorist threat with military actions aimed at degrading the capability of the group and reducing its influence. There have also been non-violent responses to the terrorist groups, including the 2016 Federal Government-initiated Operation Safe Corridor, which sought to allow for the surrender of repentant insurgents. The government also increased its collaboration with civilians to tackle the insurgency, leading to the community-led Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF), which worked closely with troops in providing topographical guidance and acting as community guards. Lately, there have been significant achievements by security forces to degrade the threats across the North-East and these are evident in the reported mass surrender of insurgents and rescue of captives, including some of the students abducted from the Government Girls Secondary School, Chibok, Borno State, while the armed bandits have continually been denied freedom of action across the spectrum. Despite these success stories, the threats over the years have still proved vicious, and as such, current military engagements should be sustained.

In recent times, reports have indicated an apparent Boko Haram\ISWAP expansion to the North-Central. Specifically, states like Niger, Plateau, and Kogi, have come under their radar. In Niger State, Governor Abubakar Sani Bello lamented that the terrorists had hoisted a flag in Shiroro Local Government. ISWAP has repeatedly claimed responsibility for a pattern of bomb explosions targeting police stations. In Plateau State, a recent large-scale attack on communities in Kanem and Wase Local Government areas with over one hundred casualties has led to speculations that it could be the handiwork of terrorists. The extent of destruction and the severity of attacks bear a heavy semblance to Boko Haram\ISWAP modus operandi.

The North-Central was previously known for communal, ethno-religious and farmer-herder conflicts. The expansion of BH/ISWAP to the North Central introduces a new dimension to the insecurity in the region. Another offshoot of Boko Haram is also wreaking havoc in other parts of the country. Jama'atu Ansarul Muslimina Fi Biladis Sudan [Supporters of Muslims in Black Africa] popularly known as Ansaru, is a breakaway faction of Boko Haram. While it shares the same objectives as Boko Haram, it disagrees with Boko Haram's style of operation on indiscriminate killings of Muslims and non-Muslims. Ansaru believes that Muslims and Non-Muslims should not be targeted indiscriminately. Operational targets for Ansaru include the Nigerian government and foreign citizens. This operational doctrine is the premise for their multiple attacks on military installations, killing of soldiers and kidnapping of foreigners. Ansaru is based in the North-West, precisely Kaduna State, where it has a solid presence in the rural areas. In Birnin-Gwari Local Government in Kaduna, Ansaru adopted a "hearts and minds'' approach to mingling with locals allowing it to exercise influence and achieve its triple objectives of recruiting new members, reducing government's authority, and spreading its ideology.
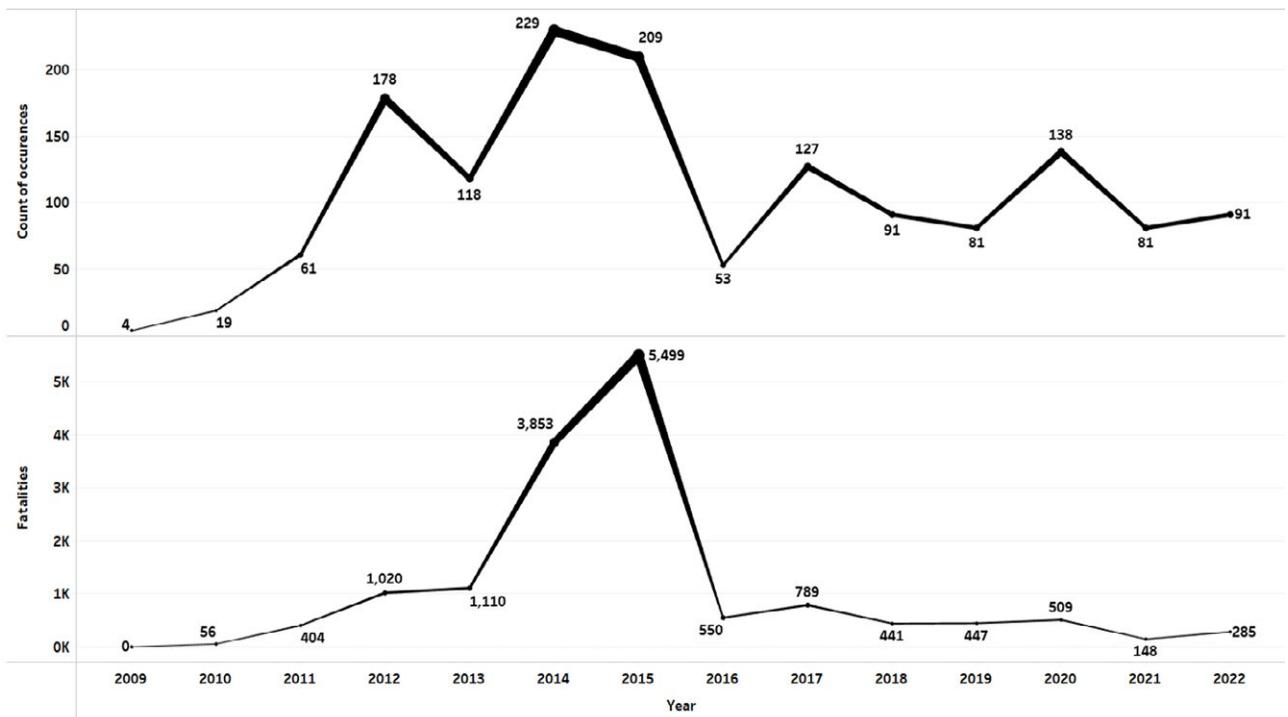

Figure 2: The line charts show the fluctuating increase and decrease of terrorist incidents and related deaths in Nigeria between 2009 and August 2022. Despite a significant reduction in 2016 and a further decline in 2019, the pattern of occurrences and deaths remain a continuing trend. Source: ACLED Data

2.1.2 Banditry

Among the many insecurity threats facing Nigeria, banditry is a cause for serious concern. Banditry is the actual or threatened use of arms, that is, any instrument of force/coercion/violence, to dispossess people of their material belongings. In recent times, banditry has taken centre stage in Nigeria's conflict landscape, from its latter-day beginning in Zamfara State in 2010. As indicated earlier, it is a problem with longstanding history in the region, dating back to the pre-colonial period.

There has been increased bandit activity in Zamfara, Kaduna, Niger, Sokoto, Kebbi, and Katsina states, an area whose combined 249,143 km^2 is larger than the United Kingdom. More recently, the threat has expanded to states like Kogi, Taraba, Plateau, and Nasarawa, as well as the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). Also, some parts of the South West have recorded incidents of banditry in recent times.

Banditry manifests in the forms of kidnapping, armed robbery, murder, rape, cattle-rustling, arson, and the exploitation of environmental resources. Some of the factors that have led to the rise and persistence of armed banditry across the country are under-governed spaces, proliferation of small arms and light weapons, grim socioeconomic conditions such as poverty and high youth unemployment, cattle rustling, protracted inter-tribal crises and illegal mining activities, especially in Zamfara and Niger states.
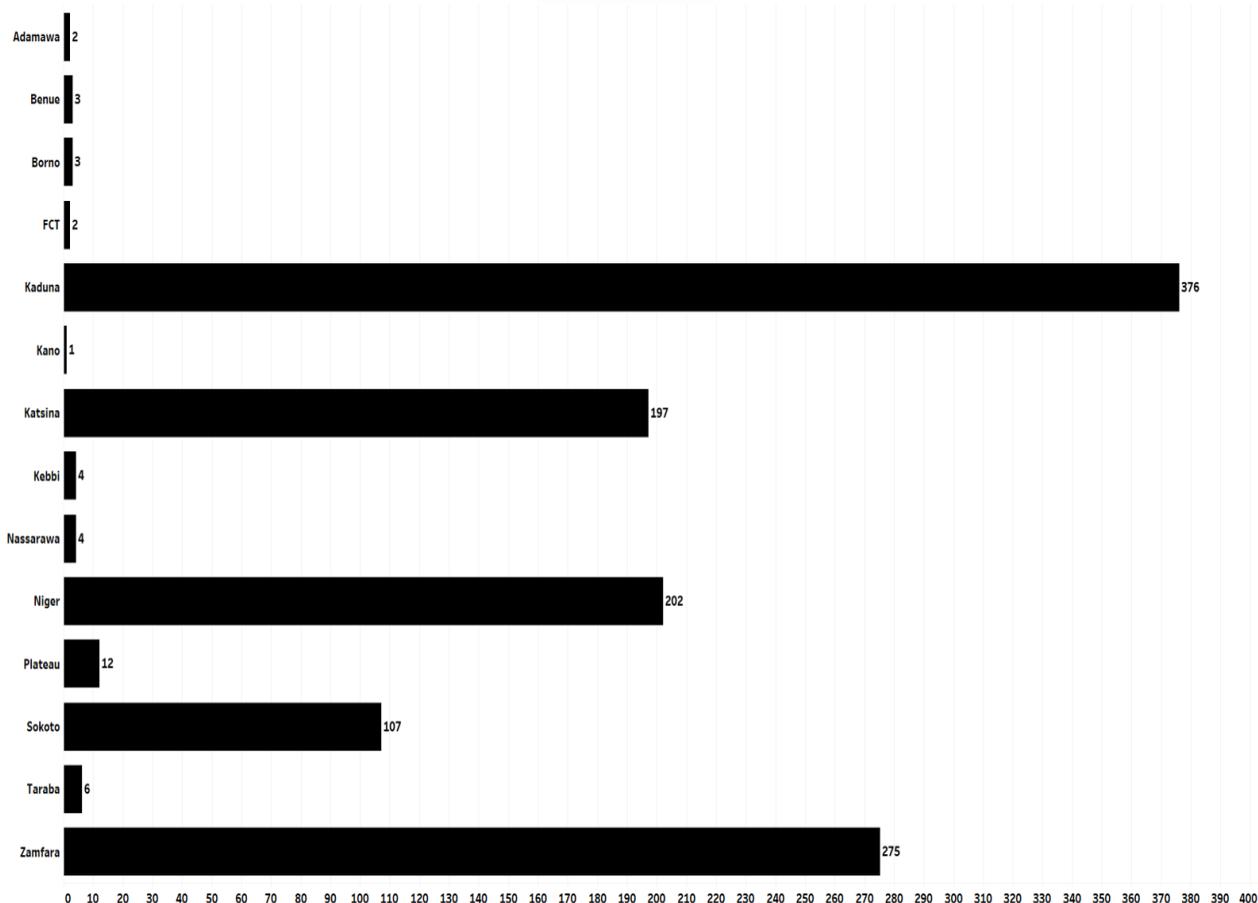

Figure 3: The bar chart highlights states affected by armed banditry and the total number of incidents between 2001 and 2022. Source: ACLED Data

The effect of armed banditry is extensive. In addition to complicating the general insecurity in the country, it has exacerbated forced migration and displacement, food insecurity, cattle rustling, destruction of property, health challenges, humanitarian crises, and death. Between 2018 and 2021, an estimated 7,500[3] lives were lost to the banditry crisis, while nearly one million became internally displaced persons (IDPs) from 798 communities in the affected states. A total of 50,000[4] Nigerians were reportedly taking refuge in the Niger Republic, at the peak of the conflict.

The Federal Government has deployed several operational responses to armed banditry, including establishing an Army Division in Sokoto. There are ongoing military, police, and joint operations to counter the threats, including Operation Whirl Stroke domiciled in Makurdi and responsible for dealing with farmer-herder clashes and related issues in Benue and parts of Nasarawa and Taraba states.

"Operation Hadarin Daji" is domiciled in Zamfara to deal with banditry and related issues in Zamfara, Sokoto, Katsina and Kebbi states. On a similar note, "Operation Whirl Punch", domiciled in Kaduna, was launched to secure Kaduna and its environs including the Abuja - Kaduna Highway. "Operation Puff Adder" is a police nationwide anti-banditry operation that is also active in the Northwest.

The Federal Government of Nigeria has also taken non-violent approaches to tackle banditry. A major example was the move seeking the Federal High Court's declaration of bandits as terrorists, a move that it believes would foster unhindered military operation. This court ruling was granted in November
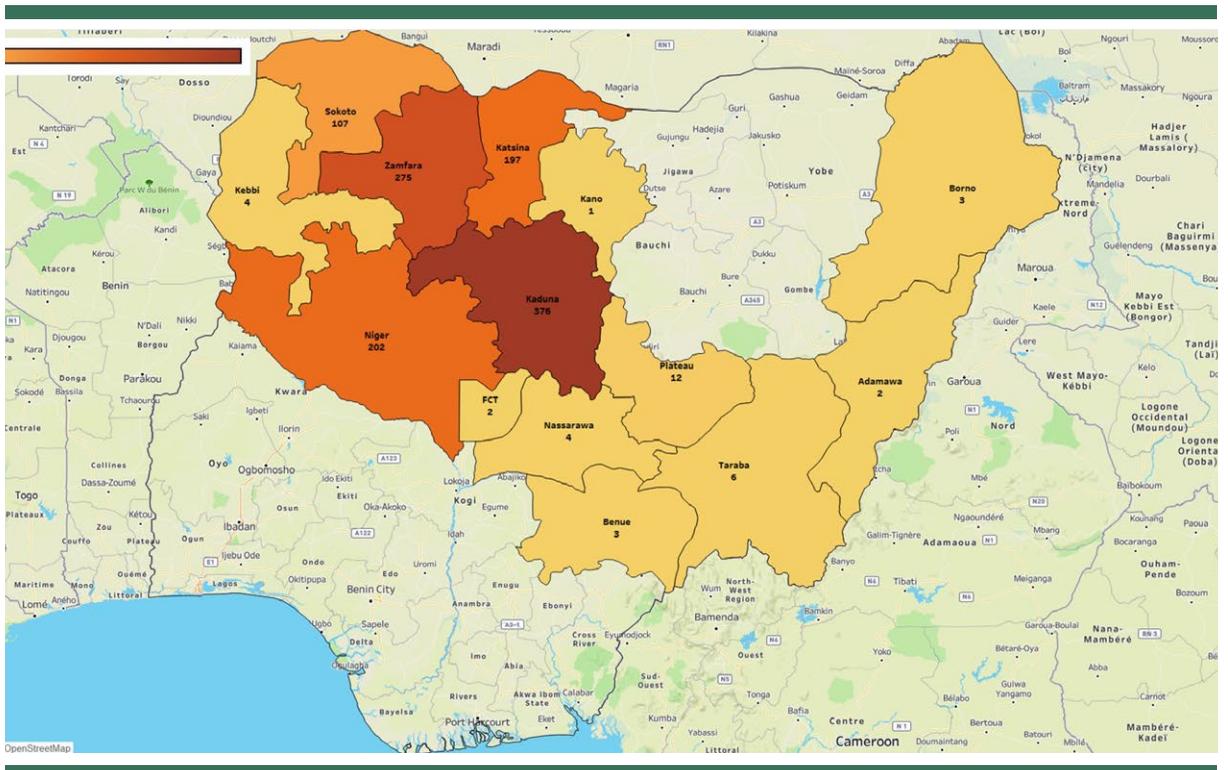
Figure 4: The map shows states and locations affected by armed banditry in Nigeria highlighted by varying sizes of red-black circles which indicate number of occurrences between 2001 to August 2022. The states most affected include Kaduna, Zamfara, Katsina, and Niger where groups are actively operational. Source: ACLED Data

[3] See: Inside Northern Communities Sacked By Bandits, Ethnoreligious Conflict, Daily Trust Saturday, March 12, 2022 accessible via https://dailytrust.com/inside-northern-communities-sacked-by-bandits-ethno-religious-conflicts

[4] See: 17 Sokoto Communities Relocate To Niger Republic Over Bandits' Attacks, August 21, 2021

2021. Some states have also passed legislation criminalising activities linked to banditry. There exist in many places, community-driven vigilante groups. Unfortunately, many of them engage in extra-judicial killings of suspected bandits, which has led to reprisals and further worsened the problem.

2.1.3 Militancy

The economic war, predominantly in the South-South (Niger Delta Region), is the result of activities of militant groups. Perceived marginalisation and struggle for oil wealth fuel violence between ethnic groups, leading to a near- militarization of the entire region by ethnic militia groups and government security forces.

Figure 5: The map shows states affected by militancy in Nigeria highlighted by varying sizes of red-black circles which indicate number of occurrences between 1997 to August 2022. Militancy remains passive-aggressive, although places more vulnerable to linked violence tend to be in South-South crude-oil-rich states where indigenous militancy was prevalent. Source: ACLED Data

Militancy is also driven by the restiveness of Niger Delta youth who are mostly unemployed and disaffected. Activities associated with militancy include economic sabotage in the form of pipeline vandalism, piracy, illegal bunkering, oil theft, kidnapping of mostly expatriates for ransom, targeted attacks, and killings, as well as communal clashes, among others.

Apart from being largely responsible for the insecurity in the region and Nigeria's current acute energy supply crisis, militancy discourages foreign investment in new power generation plants in the Niger Delta region. Despite a presidential amnesty offered by the Federal Government in 2009, militancy has remained a security challenge in the South South region, with overall implications for national security.

2.1.4 Oil Theft

Oil theft is another criminal activity that has been plaguing the Niger Delta region, with far-reaching impact on the national economy. Oil theft in the oil-producing region of Nigeria has increased significantly, despite the presence and counter-theft operations of security agencies including the Armed Forces and the National Security and Civil Defence Corps.

According to a report by the Nigeria Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (NEITI), about $42 billion was lost to oil theft and sabotage over a ten-year period. Given Nigeria's huge reliance on oil, the scale of theft of the commodity and loss in potential revenue is clearly an economic sabotage. Indeed, a picture of the revenue the country has lost to oil theft can be gleaned from the many discoveries lately of hidden pipelines, with an outlet in the sea, that siphon oil from major supply lines. One of these was described as being over four-kilometre long and believed to have existed for years.

2.1.5 Cultism

The nature and trend of cultist activities in Nigeria have gone beyond being a social menace to posing a threat to national security considering the worrisome spate of cult-related crimes recorded in different parts of the country. Cultism started as confraternities confined within university campuses to maintain law and order, as well as support social justice and human rights in Nigeria. Its activities were non-violent dispute resolution and fighting against elitist tendencies. However, over the years, cults have evolved into gangs that conduct attacks within communities, directly threatening the security of life and property.

Cultism is fuelled by unemployment, youth bulge, inconsistencies in the university system, proliferation of illicit arms, a breakdown of moral codes and values as well as other socio-cultural inadequacies manifesting in the country in recent times. Some of the known cult groups in Nigeria are Black Axe, Vikings, Eiye and Aiye confraternities.

Cultism as a social menace does not exist in isolation; crimes such as extortion, intimidation, armed robbery, assassinations, targeted killings, drug abuse, sexual assault, murder, and bullying are associated with it directly or indirectly. Cult groups also serve as a pool for thugs employed by politicians to disrupt the safe conduct of free and fair elections. Despite the efforts of security agencies to curtail cultism, the menace remains a threat to national security because it constitutes a major source of recruitment for other criminal networks in the country.

2.1.6 Secessionist Agitations

Secessionist agitations are a consequence of the Nigerian state's fragility, with reference to perceived marginalisation, injustice, exclusivist policies of government and the unequal distribution of national resources. Some secessionist agitation groups which have sprung up in recent times include the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), the Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), Biafra Zionist Movement, Niger Delta Liberation Front and Oduduwa Republic agitators.

Some members of these groups have unleashed violence against security forces, attacking innocent civilians and employing hate speech to propagate their secessionist agenda. For instance, IPOB declared a "sit-at-home order" for individuals living in the South-East states and began attacking and killing citizens

who violated this order, in total violation of citizens' rights and constituted authority. This clearly has negative implications for national security.

In response to this threat, the FG proscribed IPOB and declared it a terrorist group. The proscription has so far done little to tackle the challenge. Defiant members of the group intensified their attacks on civilians and began concealing their identities, leading to the rise of the "Unknown Gunmen" phenomenon.

2.1.7 Inter-Communal Clashes

Inter-communal clashes are a recurring security challenge in Nigeria and the dynamics differ from one clash to the other. But they are mostly occasioned by boundary/land disputes, tussles over traditional leadership and titles, settler-indigene animosity, struggle over natural resources and religious intolerance. Other causes of inter-communal clashes are perceived dominance/marginalisation in governance, nepotism, corruption, inequalities, and injustice. There is a high incidence of inter-communal clashes across the country, with the most recurring ones being farmer-herder clash in Benue State, indigene-settler clashes in Zango-Kataf and other parts of Kaduna State as well as Jos, Mangu and other parts of Plateau State and Tiv-Jukun crisis in Taraba State, as well as the Itsekiri-Urhobo crisis in Delta State. There are also occasional clashes between Hausa-Fulani and Yoruba in some parts of the South West, particularly in Sagamu, Ogun State, with the most recent incident in Shasha, Ibadan in Oyo State.
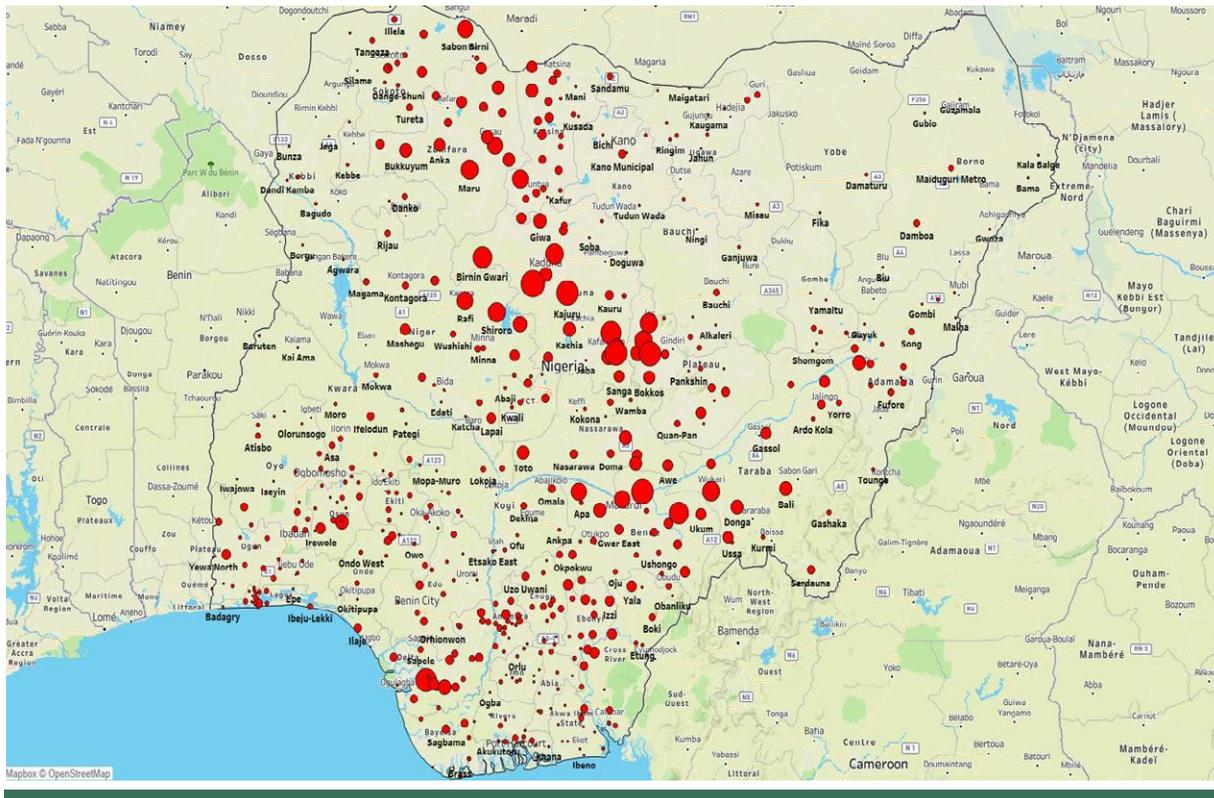

Figure 6: The map shows states affected by Inter-Communal Clashes in Nigeria highlighted by varying sizes of red-black circles which indicate the number of occurrences between 2000 to August 2022. Inter-communal confrontations are common in the lowest sub-divisions of Nigeria's various states over problems such as boundary disputes, ancestral claims to land, and so on. Source: ACLED Data
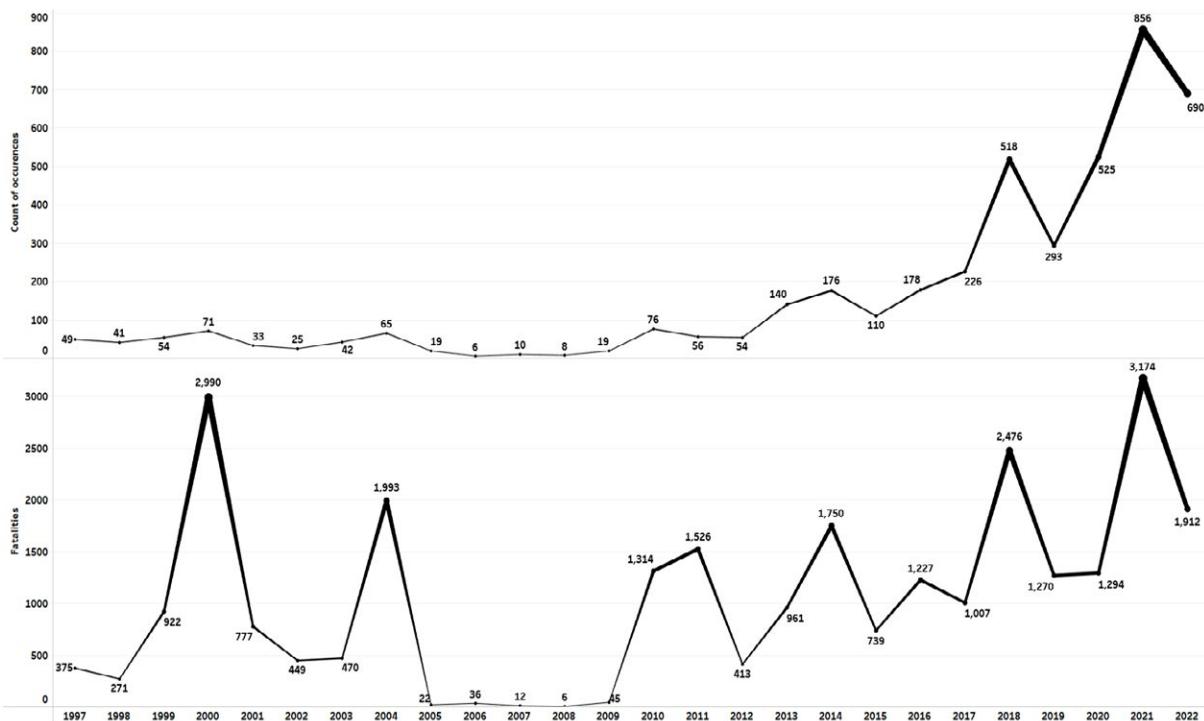
Figure 7: The chart shows a trend line of Inter-Communal Clashes incidents between 1997 and 2022. Occurrences continue to be high but are not limited to the grave mismanagement of these disputes, forcing many communities to seek self-help resulting in arms proliferation. Source: ACLED Data

Many lives have been lost in these incidents, and property worth millions destroyed, while a large number of people have been internally displaced. It is typical of governments to respond to these conflicts by setting up commissions of enquiry to investigate the remote and immediate causes of these conflicts. The recommendations are seldom implemented, and perpetrators are hardly prosecuted. The lack of political will to prosecute those who participated in killings and destruction contributes to feelings of injustice, which serve as a latent spark to another conflict as grievances persist.

2.1.8 Herders/Farmers Clashes

Historically, the North West and Middle Belt states are the fertile plains and grazing lands of Nigeria where nomadic pastoralist and sedentary agriculturalist groups coexisted and traded. They turned to local peacekeeping mechanisms when land disputes arose. However, desiccation and large land allocations to estate owners have pushed herders off their historical grazing routes. Likewise, according to aerial analysis by the U.S. Geological Survey, land available for open grazing in Nigeria's Middle Belt declined by 38 percent between 1975 and 2013, while the area dedicated to farming nearly trebled.

These dynamics are being driven by climate shifts, exclusionary land policies, and population growth while demand for meat supplied by the country's herders is rising. The consequential effects of these problems are clashes between farmers and herders over land, which have spurred the formation of ethnic militias, vigilante raids, and extrajudicial killings in Adamawa, Taraba, Benue, Plateau, Kaduna,
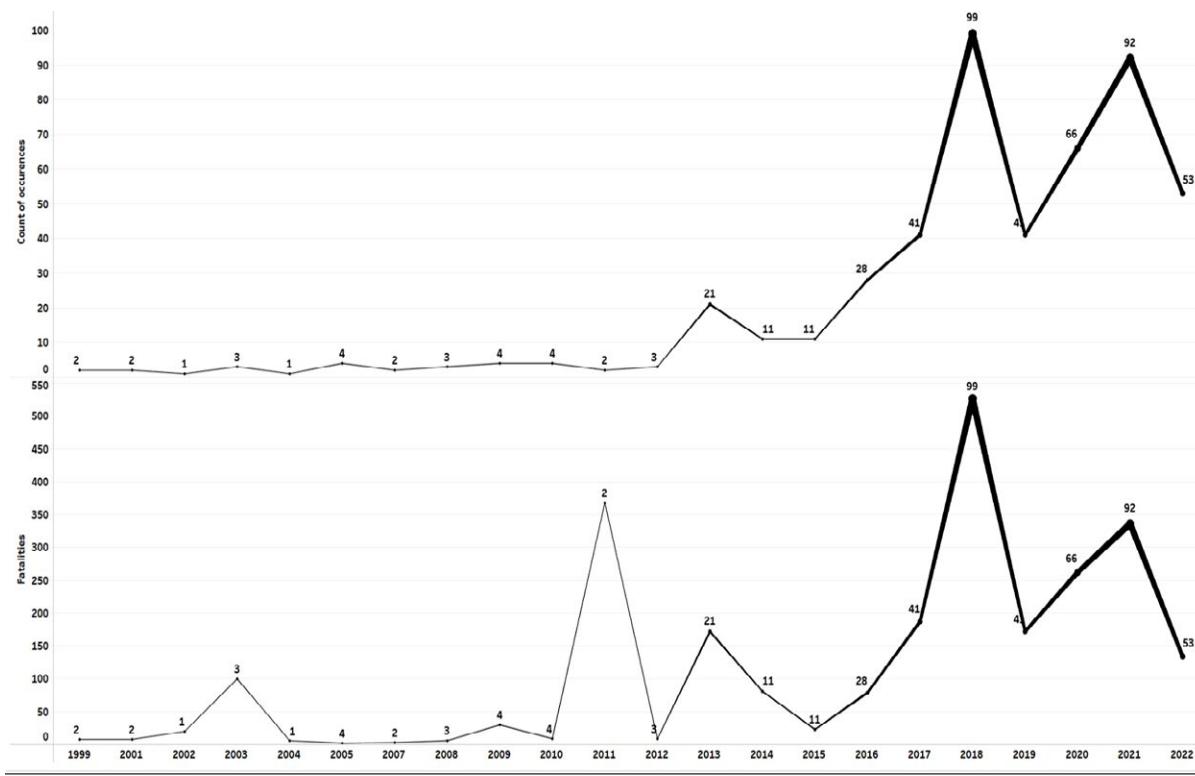
Figure 8: The chart shows a trend line of Herders/Farmer Clashes incidents and associated fatalities in Nigeria between 1999 and August 2022. Source: ACLED Data

and Zamfara states in the North East, the North Central and the North West geo-political zones. The violence has spread to the southern part of the country, with incidents of herder-farmer clashes recorded in parts of Ogun and Oyo states in the South West and Abia State in the South East. The crisis has indeed taken a dangerous dimension with the either subtle or brazen use of ethno-religious sentiments.

Clashes between farmers and herders are not a new phenomenon in Nigeria. It is a phenomenon which goes back to pre-independence. In fact, to tackle the challenge, the then Northern Regional Government created grazing reserves, which was gazetted in 1965[5]. The reserves were encroached upon by farmlands, urbanisation, and population explosion. In 1989, the government established the National Commission for Nomadic Education for the purpose of socio-economically integrating pastoralists into national life through the provision of basic education and livelihood skills, but it suffered from inadequate funding by the government.

At the sub-national level and more recently, states like Benue and Taraba have placed a ban on open grazing as a response to the protracted conflict between farmers and herders. This is despite the numerous military deployments to the hotspots of this crisis. Recently, the federal government sought to implement the RUGA[6] policy, but it was met by severe pushback across the country, so much so that it had to be abandoned in favour of a National Livestock Transformation Plan[7].

---

[5] Grazing Reserve Law of Northern Region of Nigeria (NN Law of 1965)

[6] Rural Grazing Area (RUGA) drives its name from the Hausa word for a cattle settlement, Ruga. The policy proposed creation of confined settlement for herders and their cattle to avoid free ranching system in which herders roam about with their animals.

[7] On 7 July 2022, Governors of the 19 Northern States under the Northern Governors Forum held a meeting with the Minister of Agriculture calling on the Federal Government to implement the National Livestock Transformation Plan (NLPT)

2.1.9 Religious Fundamentalism

In Nigeria, the word fundamentalism has been synonymous with religious extremists since the Maitatsine Riot in Kano in 1980. Religious fundamentalism includes all sorts of religious extremist behaviours and is majorly situated in Northern Nigeria. One religious group that has the most confrontation with the state is the umbrella organisation of Shiites in Nigeria, called the Islamic Movement in Nigeria (IMN). It is largely domiciled in Zaria, Kaduna State, but it has a presence in most states in Northern Nigeria. Sheikh Ibrahim Zakzaky is the spiritual head of IMN. The government views most of the group's activities as a violation of law and order while accusing the group of attempting to run a parallel government in a constitutional democracy.

The government has cited some of the group's unlawful activities to include blocking of highways during processions, illegal possession of firearms, harassment and intimidation of innocent citizens, and altercations with security forces.

Shiite and Sunni sects have clashed in Nigeria for decades. Most of the violence revolved around religious processions and festivals. The Ashura processions (a day of mourning for Shiite Muslims) have been marked by sectarian conflicts in Nigeria. Road blockades and heavy traffic on the Zaria highway, are usually condemned and sometimes lead to Shia and Sunni Muslim faithful pelting one another with stones.

The Kaduna State government proscribed the activities of the group, and the Federal Government successfully got a court ruling that declared it a terrorist organisation. The group has challenged this declaration, arguing that it is a religious movement and that it has a fundamental right to freedom of worship that is recognised by national and international laws.

Religious clashes in Nigeria are also common between Muslims and Christians, this is despite a majority of Nigeria's population being either Muslim or Christian. Intra-religious conflict in Nigeria has been exacerbated by the rise of terrorist and extremist groups and other factors such as communal clashes, introduction of Shariah law, violent rhetoric from preachers and feelings of marginalisation.

Some notable examples of religious crisis are the Kafanchan-Kaduna crisis of the 1980s and 1990s; the Kaduna Sharia riots of 2000 and the Bauchi riots in 2001, both caused by the introduction of Sharia law in those states; as well as the 2001 riots in Jos, caused by a governmental appointment. Hundreds of lives were lost, and properties destroyed during these conflicts and the effects reverberated beyond state borders. These conflicts threaten national security and stability[8].

---

8 Babatunde, Aishat. "The Trials Of Nigeria's Shia Muslims." HumAngle Media, 4 August 2022, https://humanglemedia.com/the-trials-of-nigerias-shia-muslims/. Accessed 4 October 2022
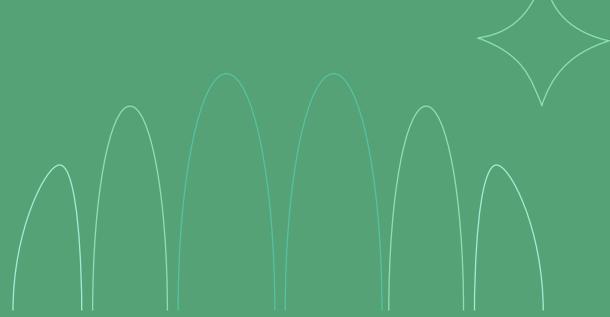
3 Drivers And Manifestations Of Insecurity In Nigeria

3. Drivers And Manifestations Of Insecurity In Nigeria

3.1 Drivers Of Insecurity

This section will discuss the drivers and manifestations of insecurity in Nigeria. Drivers refer to the environmental conditions that both kindle and nurture insecurity, while the manifestations refer to the reactions of the people to these environmental conditions. Insecurity does not thrive in a vacuum. Some factors are precursory to it. Some of the drivers of insecurity in Nigeria include but are not limited to:

3.1.1 Ineffective Criminal Justice System

Efficient criminal justice administration is key to curbing crimes in the society and ensuring long-term solutions to security challenges. Unfortunately, however, there are existing inadequacies and human indiscretions that make the system unable to fully rise to the challenge. Corruption in the law enforcement and justice sector aids escape of criminals from the law, which emboldens and imbues them with a sense of impunity and makes the wronged persons take the laws into their own hands for vengeance. Extortion and torture in the hands of security agents have been cited by many high-profile criminals as a reason for their indulgence in criminal activities or their extreme show of sadism.

There is also insufficient capacity and lack of deliberate effort to take apprehended high-profile criminals through the justice dispensation process. For example, the trial of Boko Haram suspects in Kainji, Niger State, which began in 2017, drew a lot of criticism for lacking sufficient transparency and rigour, and for the fact it had yet to cover a lot of suspects, relative to the number of persons in custody.

3.1.2 Proliferation Of Small Arms And Light Weapons

Arms proliferation is a driver of insecurity in Nigeria. Arms proliferation has been defined as the "excessive accumulation and illegal spread of weapons which could have a destabilising effect on national security)"[9]. The point to note here is that the illegal movement of arms from one place to another denotes illicit arms availability for illegal use and by illegal persons or groups of persons.

| Socio-Political Grievances | Climate Change | Destruction Of Farmlands | Kidnapping/ Mass Abduction |

---

[9] Bem Japhet Audu, "Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons in Nigeria: Implications on National Security", in OE Tangban, CCC Osakwe, SO Okeniyi and HE Ayamasaowei (Eds.), Nigerian Defence and Security: Essays in Commemoration of Nigerian Defence Academy Golden Jubilee, Kaduna: Nigerian Defence Academy, 2014, p. 354

There is a high flow of illegal arms in different parts of the country[10]. The availability of these arms to criminal elements poses a danger for the country as criminals have access to automatic weapons, which in some cases are more sophisticated than those used by security agents.

Readily available arms are often incentives for people and groups with ill motives to conduct attacks, further exacerbating insecurity. Arms proliferation is a recipe for disaster, which further highlights the connecting line between the proliferation of arms and insecurity, as without access to arms, it will be difficult, for criminal elements to operate. The implication for Nigeria is the high level of insecurity currently manifesting across the country.

3.1.3 High Incidence of Poverty and Unemployment

Nigeria was once described as the poverty capital of the world, by the World Poverty Clock, an online real time aggregator. It is argued that four in every 10 Nigerians are living in poverty, with just 17 percent of Nigerian workers having the wage jobs able to lift people out of poverty[11]. As of the fourth quarter of 2020, the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics reported that the unemployment rate had risen to 33%, making it the second highest on the global list (Bloomberg 2021). According to the Nigerian National Bureau of Statistics, 39.1 percent of Nigerians lived below the international poverty line of $1.90 per person per day (2011 PPP) in 2018/19. Yet a further 31.9 percent of Nigerians had consumption levels between $1.90 and $3.20 per person per day, making them vulnerable to falling into extreme poverty when shocks occur[12].

In addition, a high population growth rate, limited job opportunities, and the low value of the naira in the exchange/capital market have further pushed many Nigerians below the poverty line. High incidence of poverty and unemployment expands the pool of possible recruits for criminal activities.

3.1.4 Climate Change

Climate change, emanating from global warming, orchestrated by human activities in the environment, has led to depletion of the ozone layer. Scientists have reached a consensus that global warming is real and that human activities are causing the warming trend[13]. Increasing global temperatures are having serious consequences on human lives with the world witnessing rising sea levels, changes in climate patterns, changes in the amount and pattern of precipitation, and more severe weather, including stronger tropical storms, droughts, and heat waves, floods, among others.

The effects of climate change are being felt across the globe, but in Nigeria, it has had a significant impact in increasing conflict and insecurity. Coastal erosion and flooding are now frequently experienced in Lagos, Kogi, and Benue states, among others, due to high precipitation. Drought and desertification have increased in recent years, negatively impacting the arid northern states. The Lake Chad, for example, has shrunk by 90 percent since 1960s[14]. Elsewhere, overflowing rivers and torrential rains have led to displacement of hundreds of thousands of people and destruction of large expanse of farmlands. These changes in climate have led to population displacement and increased migration to safer and more prosperous locations.

---

[10] The SB Morgan (SBM) Intelligence report on "Small arms, mass atrocities and migration in Nigeria" gives a detailed analysis of the scale of arms proliferation across Nigeria.

[11] World Bank Group, "Poverty & Equity Brief, Africa Western & Central Nigeria, April 2021," Available on povertydata.worldbank.org Nigeria www.worldbank.org/poverty, Accessed on 11 August, 2022.

[12] World Bank Group, "Poverty & Equity Brief, Africa Western & Central Nigeria…

[13] Olaniyi O.A, Ojekunle Z.O. and Amujo B.T, "Review of Climate Change and its Effect on Nigeria Ecosystem", International Journal of African and Asian Studies - An Open Access International Journal Vol.1 2013, p. 58.

[14] See: Lake Chad: Can the vanishing lake be saved? BBC, March 31, 2018. Accessible at: https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-43500314

3.1.5 Quest for Resource Control

Nigeria is rich in various natural solid and liquid mineral deposits. There is no region that lacks an important resource. Section 1(1) of the Nigerian Minerals and Mining Act of 2007 gives the Federal Government ownership, control, and the right to mining of all mineral resources in the country[15]. Nevertheless, resource control has been the cause of insecurity in different parts of the country, including the Niger Delta, which is rich in crude oil.

The Niger Delta militants, for instance, argued that their cause was a form of reaction to the government's neglect of oil spillage as well as the ravaging activities of oil exploration in the Niger Delta[16]. Despite their argument, the activities of militants threaten national security because they are a form of economic sabotage.

According to reports, an estimated 80% of mining in the northern region, particularly gold mining in Zamfara, is carried out illegally with militia support (bandits)[17]. In Zamfara State, for example, the suspension and subsequent FG ban on all mining activities had no deterrent effect on illegal mining operations or crimes of banditry. Rather, it merely shifted the focus of attacks to vulnerable civilian communities and commuters, as well as movement to other state mines, most notably Katsina and Kano[18].

3.1.6 Easy Access To Illicit Drugs

Drug proliferation is a major problem in Nigeria. In 2018, a UNODC report stated that approximately 14.4 percent of Nigerians, or 14.3 million people between the ages of 15 and 64 years, used illicit drugs[19]. Drugs are often found in the possession of criminal groups across the country, and many criminals have often confessed to using drugs to enhance their boldness before conducting attacks.

The prevalence of illicit drugs can be attributed to the country's porous borders and the inability of the drug enforcement agency to effectively tackle the problem. Corruption has also contributed to the ongoing drug problem, as some government officials and civil servants who have responsibility to combat the menace are often found conniving with criminal drug networks. Criminal and terrorist groups have been known to conduct active drug smuggling operations as part of their funding sources, further perpetuating insecurity across the country.

2018
14.4%

14.3m
Age: 15-64yrs

Percentage and total of Nigerians that used illicit bw the ages drugs of 15 & 64yrs

---

[15] Maurice Ogbonnaya, "Illegal Minning and Rural banditry in North West Nigeria: Response, Successes and Challenges," Policy Brief: Enhancing African Response to Transnational Organised Crime (ENACT), A Funded Project of the European Union, Issue 19, November 2020, p. 2. Available on https://enact-africa.s3.amazonaws.com/site/uploads/2020-11-19-illegal-mining-policy-brief.pdf, Accessed on 12 August, 2022.

[16] Olaosun O. Elijah and Nta Abasiama J, "The Amnesty Programme and the Empowerment of Warlords in the Niger Delta," (A Paper Presented at the Conference on Security, Development and Economic Development in Nigeria, Nigerian Defence Academy, Kaduna, 2017)

[17] Ogbonnaya, Maurice. "How illegal mining is driving local conflicts in Nigeria." ISS Africa, 16 June 2020, https://issafrica.org/iss-today/how-illegal-mining-is-driving-local-conflicts-in-nigeria. Accessed 29 September 2022.

[18] Nwannah, Ifeanyi. "Bandits relocating from Zamfara, Katsina to Kano gold mining camps." Daily Post Nigeria, 1 November 2021, https://dailypost.ng/2021/11/01/bandits-relocating-from-zamfara-katsina-to-kano-gold-mining-camps/. Accessed 29 September 2022.

[19] Gang and Youth Violence, www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publication/crime/ending-gang-violence-detail report. Assessed on January 2022

3.1.7 Porous Borders

Nigeria's security situation is exacerbated by its porous borders, which allow for unchecked/unsupervised entry into the nation. According to the Nigeria Immigration Service, there were over 1,490 illegal entry routes into Nigeria as of May 2022, compared to over 80 supervised entry ports[20]. Nigeria has a land area of 923,769 square kilometres and borders spanning 4,047 kilometres with Niger in the north (1,497 km), Benin in the west (773 km), Chad in the North East (87 km), and Cameroon in the east (1,690 km)[21].

The parlous state of the country's borders is starkly underlined by the largely unhindered crossings by traders and occasionally militia groups from Niger that have been recorded in the Northern state of Sokoto. Also, Ambazonia rebel fighters evading capture have crossed the Nigeria-Cameroon border to seek safety in border territories in the North East state of Taraba and the South-South state of Cross River[22]. Terrorist combatants and supplies have been observed moving through the Nigerian-Chad and Nigerian-Cameroon borders in North East Borno, demanding coordinated military operations to halt these trends. In the South West and the North West, smuggling of vehicles and other consumables such as food and even petrol from Benin and Togo is a continuous trend around Lagos, Ogun, Kwara, and Niger states.

Lack of infrastructure such as security, roads, electricity, healthcare facilities, education, and water supply in communities along the borders contributes to unemployment and thus restiveness. This has exposed many to the practice of trans-border crimes such as smuggling of contraband goods. Social ills like smuggling of Small Arms and Light Weapons, money laundering, drug, and human trafficking, are also prevalent.

3.1.8 Socio-Political And Economic Grievances

There are also grievances from some parts of the country regarding socio-political and economic exclusion. For instance, since the end of the Nigerian Civil War in 1967, no south-easterner has ruled the country as either Head of State or as President. The cases of resource control and economic marginalisation equally fall under this section. These grievances cannot be ignored because they have been the sources of disaffection and some of the security challenges in the country.

3.1.9 Poor Land Use Policies

Statutory land laws and/or land use policies in Nigeria date back to as far as 1910. The land tenure system land use, ownership, and rights are vested in the government. However, individual rights to land ownership have not been eliminated. It is important to note that land ownership, use, and rights have

---

[20] Channels Television. "Immigration Decries Inability To Effectively Man Borderlines, 1490 Illegal Entry Points." Channels Television, 24 May 2022, https://www.channelstv.com/2022/05/24/immigration-decries-inability-to-effectively-man-borderlines-1490-illegal-entry-points/. Accessed 29 September 2022.

[21] CIA World Factbook. "Photos of Nigeria - The World Factbook." CIA, 23 September 2022, https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/nigeria/. Accessed 30 September 2022.

[22] Asare, Asare. "Ambazonian soldiers kill 20 in Boki, Cross River." Daily Post Ng, 29 May 2022, https://dailypost.ng/2022/05/29/ambazonian-soldiers-kill-20-in-boki-cross-river/. Accessed 29 September 202

[23] Muhammed Bashar, "Public Land Policy, New Trends: Challenges in Nigerian Institutional Frameworks for State and Public Sector Land Management", (FIG/FAO/CNG International Seminar on State and Public Sector Land Management Verona, Italy, September 9-10, 2008), Available on https://www.fig.net/resources/proceedings/2008/verona_fao_2008_comm7/papers/09_sept/4_2_nuhu.pdf, Accessed on 10 August, 2022, p. 1.

**Illegal mining activities like
this fuel insecurity.**

Photo credit: Abdulaziz Abdulaziz

been a source of controversy, thus necessitating strict government control. This led the government to promulgate the land policy instrument on March 29th, 1978, known as the Land Use Act (LUA). This was the principal Nigerian land policy regarding all land, designed to a great extent to unify the laws relating to land tenure in Nigeria[23].

Due to growth and development, there has been more demand for land, thus bringing about more challenges around land ownership and use in the country. The creation of more states has had people divided between states, leading to complications on border issues as well as in states of origin where kith and kin are divided between states. Again, the demand for better road networks, the establishment of industries, and the overall development of states has built pressure around land use. Like the border issue, land use is another controversial issue for the Nigerian state.

3.1.10 Socio-Political Imbalances

Distribution of government's resources, employment, and appointments in Nigeria has always been a source of controversy among the many regional and ethnic groups in Nigeria. The cry of marginalisation and perceived favouring of some groups against others come up every now and then. This gave rise to the concept of Federal Character[24] enshrined in the working laws of Nigeria. It is, therefore, both a reaction as well as a system. The principle is supposedly a positive reaction to correct the wrongs of the past in the conduct of public service and to exploit the great diversities of the country. Despite the principle in place, the practical implementation and interpretation of this policy have not sufficiently addressed the intendment of its framers[25]. Inequalities serve as the tinder for agitations by ethnic, regional, or religious groups.

[24]Okorie, C. O. & Greg, E., "Federal Character Principles, Nation Building and National Integration in Nigeria: Issues and Options", *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences* 4(16), 2013

[25]Timothy Onimisi, Ku Hasnita Ku Samsu, Mohd Mahadee bin Ismail and Murni Binti Wan Mohd Nor, "Federal Character Principles: A Conceptual Analysis", International Journal of Social Science and Humanities Research (ISSN 2348-3164, online), Vol. 6, Issue 2, Month: April - June 2018.

3.1.11 Ineffective Security Architecture

There are similarities in the statutory roles of the various security services and agencies in Nigeria. It therefore makes it difficult for them to demarcate their constitutional responsibilities, which often culminates in clashes between different personnel on various security matters rather than a joined-up approach to fighting crime in a joint security environment.

To achieve overall national security, cooperative and team operations are necessary between or among these agencies. It is not an exaggeration to assert that the fight against insurgency and banditry in the country is unsuccessful, partly because of the disharmonious disposition of the security agencies. The Nigerian government should, therefore, develop a mechanism capable of harmonising the various agencies and, as well, enlighten them on the need to place national security above everything else.

One other factor that has worsened insecurity in the country is the inadequacies within the production of credible intelligence, including the lack of synergy and poor usage of intelligence products, which has allowed the threat elements to persist and fester. Where there is sufficient information on the threats, the process of collection and analysis of same is stifled by service bureaucracy. In addition, the decision maker's reaction to available intelligence is often slow and sometimes uncoordinated. Intelligence operations need to be better coordinated, more robust and where possible, decentralised to identify threats within localities.

Additionally, despite provisions within the Intelligence Services Act 2001, the government is yet to appoint an ombudsman and standards unit for the intelligence community, which will ensure it remains in compliance with Nigeria's democratic tenets.
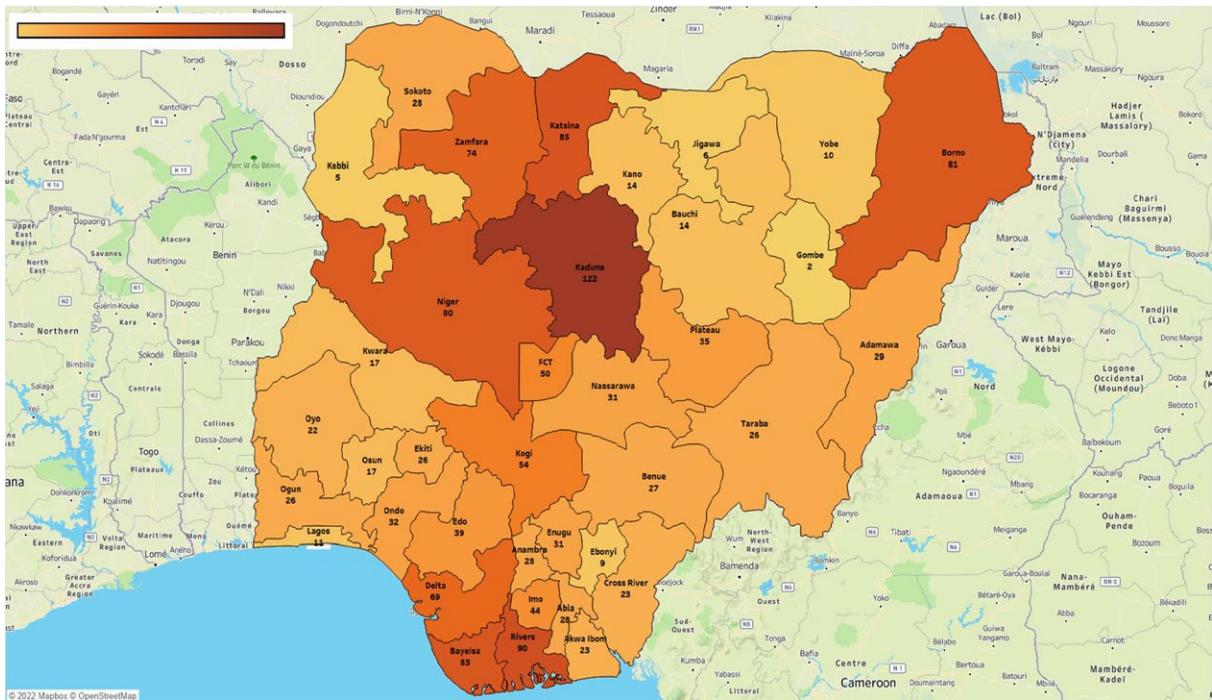

Figure 9: States in Nigeria that have experienced kidnappings or mass abductions are indicated on the map by varying-sized red-black circles that represent the number of incidents between 1997 and August 2022. Drivers of kidnapping/abduction in Nigeria involve terrorism, secession, militancy, and sheer criminality. Source: ACLED Data

3.2 Manifestations/Tactics

The various threats to security in Nigeria manifest through kidnapping/mass abduction, serial/ritual killings, oil theft/vandalism, destruction of farmland, animal rustling, suicide bombing/PBIED/VBIED, land mines, and disinformation to discredit the government. These manifestations/tactics have negatively impacted the socio-economic development of the country.

3.2.1 Kidnapping/Mass Abduction

Kidnapping and mass abduction are tactics employed by insurgents/terrorists, militants, armed bandits, and other criminal gangs. Terrorism and kidnapping have become the new normal in Nigeria. The hitherto little-known crime of kidnapping for ransom has taken a drastic turn in the crime history of the country. It takes various forms and adopts violence, terror, coercion, intimidation, and aggression. It is performed with the intent to receive ransom by threat or force and has been felt in virtually all parts of the country.

There are several types of kidnapping, but the primary motives seen in Nigeria are: criminal kidnapping and political kidnapping. Criminal kidnapping is the one conducted with the main motive of collecting ransom from the victim's family, while political kidnapping is the type of kidnapping where the foremost objective is to further the political aim of a person, group, or people.

Whichever form it takes, kidnapping has been grossly experienced, with instances too numerous to be highlighted. It has been employed by all manner of criminal groups in Nigeria, including Niger Delta militants, Boko Haram insurgents, bandits, herdsmen, and criminal gangs.
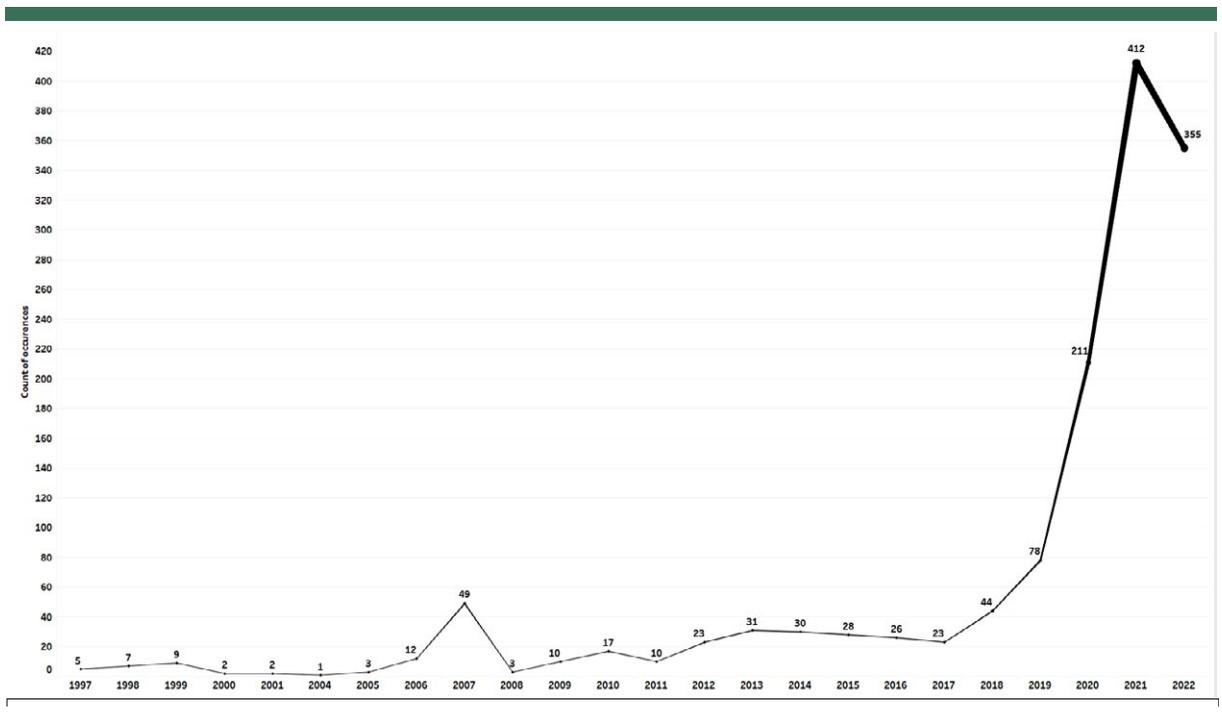
Figure 10: A trend line of abduction cases between 1997 and 2022 is shown on the graph. While the trend of kidnappings fluctuating high began around 2005 and peaked significantly in 2007 during the election season, it continued to slowly rise and experienced a significant spike in 2018 due to terrorist attacks on schools such as the Dapchi school-girls mass abduction, other long-running insurgencies in the Northwest, and varying levels of criminal activity in other parts of the country. Source: ACLED Data

3.2.2 Serial/Ritual Killings

Ritual killing has become another common phenomenon, strategy, as well as security threat in Nigeria. The ritual killers reportedly go about in search of human parts – heads, tongues, and sex organs – which are said to be demanded by witch doctors, juju priests, traditional medicine men or women, and/or occultists who require such for sacrifices or for the preparation of assorted magical potions. There are currently ritual killings of different natures and categories, including: traditional ritual killings; occult ritual killings, and contemporary ritual killings.

Ritual killing is a serious issue pertaining to life and death, a violation of human rights, and the sanctity of human life. Ritual killing for sundry reasons poses a serious security threat. It has been experienced in different parts of the country, but is more pronounced in the southern part of Nigeria.

3.2.3 Destruction Of Farmlands

The herdsmen, who are essentially nomadic, rear their animals in the bushes, and traversed Nigeria's north and south in search of greener pastures for their herd. The outcome has been a long history of farmer-herder conflicts across the country following the rise of tension around grazing reserve areas where such existed, and on encroachment on people's farms.

Moreso, whereby people's lands were excised without due compensation, farmers, due to the encroachment of herds on their farms, became antagonistic to herders. However, as observed by Ingawa et al., in most cases, crop or farm damage has become the cause for alarm. Thus, crop or farm damage rather than land disputes dominated the reasons for hostility between farmers and herders. This has continued to date with resultant food insecurity situation across the country.

3.2.4 Increased Use Of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDS)

The use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and similar devices is a common strategy of terrorists in Nigeria. With focus on Boko Haram, the terror group uses IEDs, including car bombs, and suicide bombers to kill civilians at markets, transport hubs, schools, and other public institutions[26]. The sect also repeatedly attacked major cities in the north-east and struck targets in major cities across Nigeria. At the time of increased Boko Haram activities across the north, the sect had cells in Kaduna with members who were manufacturing IEDs at Rigasa, a community in Kaduna State that gained notoriety for bombing activities before the terror cells were demobilized. In recent attacks such as the Kaduna train attack, IEDs were deployed by the bandits. The use of IEDs and similar devices has been one of the key modes of operation of these terrorist groups.

3.2.5 Declining Patriotism/National Cohesion

As insecurity persists, Nigerians continue to question the government over its inability to meet its obligations under the social contract. This leads to a decline in patriotism, an inclination often exploited by non-state actors in their recruitment drive. Associated with this is the decline in social cohesion. The

---

[26] Klobucista, Claire, et al. "Nigeria's Battle With Boko Haram." Council on Foreign Relations, 8 August 2018, https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/nigerias-battle-boko-haram. Accessed 29 September 2022.

African Polling Institute, API, conducted the nationwide Citizens Perception Survey, (CPS)[27], between the months of April and May 2021 to measure social cohesion in Nigeria. The Nigeria Social Cohesion Index (NSCI) was computed as 44.2 per cent, which according to the report, is below the average 50 percentage points and indicating that Nigeria is not as socially cohesive as it ought to be.

3.2.6 Proliferation Of Irregular Security Outfits

As more communities got attacked with little to no response from the security forces, citizens began setting up local vigilantes and militia groups, tasked with providing community and state security. This has led to the proliferation of various armed groups across the country. These irregular security outfits pose a national security threat because they are armed, and their allegiance is not necessarily to the country, but to the interests (tribes, local communities) they are protecting. That means at some point they could deem the state as the threat and conduct attacks against it. These outfits are not constitutionally recognised, and the operators are not trained to perform the specialised functions they engage in.

Therefore, while the outfits may be necessary as a stopgap to deal with prevailing security challenges, it is important that steps are taken to control and monitor their activities. They could be subsumed under Federal or state security apparatus for monitoring and evaluation for effectiveness and efficiency. For instance, in Pakistan, militias are organised into a Frontier Force under the command of a serving Major General with middle and junior cadre officers seconded from the Pakistan Army as unit and sub-unit commanders and staff officers. This force is essentially utilised to secure Afghanistan - Pakistan border lines and deal with sundry other security challenges. Similar structure could be created in Nigeria for effective and efficient utilisation of the irregular security outfits.

A bandit kingpin, Shehu Rekeb flanked by fighters at his then enclave in Sububu Forest, west of Shinkafi town, Zamfara State

Photo credit: Abdulaziz Abdulaziz

---

[27] "Nigeria is much more divided today than 4 years ago – New API Survey." *Africa Polling Institute*, 8 September 2021, https://africapolling.org/2021/09/08/nigeria-is-much-more-divided-today-than-4-years-ago-new-api-survey/. Accessed 30 September 2022
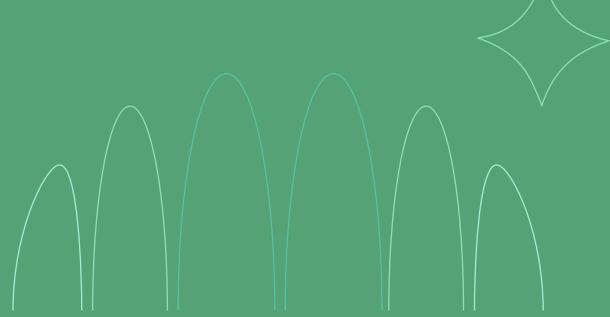
4 Policy Recommendations

4. Policy Recommendations

Tackling insecurity in a sustainable manner requires systematically correcting the drivers of insecurity and strategically and tactically combating their manifestations. Addressing only the manifesations of insecurity wihtout tackling its drivers is akin to merely cutting off the tail of a poisonous and dangerous snake while keeping intact its head and the rest of its body. As explained earlier, the drivers of insecurity are those environmental conditions and regulations that have encouraged the commencement and continuation of insecurity. An effective approach to stemming insecurity will require the simultaneous use of kinetic and non-kinetic solutions to degrade threats and maintain peace and stability across Nigeria. The security policy recommendations proffered in this document thus include both kinetic and non-kinetic actions.

4.1 Prioritise Dialogue And Soft-Approach To Conflict Resolution

Much of the conflict manifestation seen across Nigeria, from Niger Delta and secessionist agitations, to armed conflict in Zamfara and much of the Middle Belt could be avoided if there was a constructive engagement of all stakeholders to address the underlying issues. Conflict mediation and resolution structures must be re-instituted at the community level. These should consist of traditional rulers, women and youth representatives, vigilantes, and security agencies. They should be incorporated into the local government infrastructure and become a part of the community governance structure.

4.1.1 Enhance the Role of Traditional Justice Mechanisms

Research conducted by the Institute of Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR) found that traditional rulers, as custodians of tradition and culture, commanded the respect of community members and possessed immense social influence. Unfortunately, this influence has been waning over the years, due post-independence decline in the roles of the traditional authorities.

Invariably, traditional rulers have been found to be both victims and beneficiaries of communal conflicts, as they are often involved in mediating over land boundary issues, chieftaincy, and supremacy conflicts. Their influence and access allow them to be instrumental in preservation of peace in many communities. Enhancing the role of traditional platforms for truth-telling and reconciliation will promote forgiveness and build social cohesion within affected communities.

Justice

Border Security

Security Streamline

4.1.2 Embrace National Trauma Healing and Victim Reparation

A national trauma healing framework should be instituted to address deep-rooted grievances and begin the process of healing and reconciliation among warring groups, tribes, and communities. Reparations for victims of human rights violations and miscarriage of justice are material and symbolic benefits that demonstrate a direct and meaningful way for victims to receive justice through compensation. Since trust between the people and institutions of the criminal justice system is severely damaged in certain local communities, local mechanisms to enhance Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) should be promoted to fill the trust gap.

Emerging conflict indicators should be addressed through ADR mechanisms before they escalate to violence. These should also usher in a national inclusive dialogue framework which can hold at the state and regional level for various interest groups. This will show the political will to address root causes of violent conflict and clear solution implementation can be introduced.

4.2 Communicate More Stategically

Currently, Nigeria's adversaries dominate the information space. Nigerians are ill-informed and routinely disbelieve information from official sources. Information craft is crucial in addressing targeted narratives for state building.

The Forum of Spokespersons of Security Agencies should be revived and anchored in the Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA) for proactive engagement. It is recommended that the ONSA works with the Ministry of Information and the National Orientation Agency to develop a Strategic Communications framework and operational concept. Existing frameworks require an update to reflect contemporary communication channels and challenges. This framework and concept should be a comprehensive, joined-up and believable national security narrative aimed at mobilising all of society behind government's effort at making the country more secure.

4.3 Review of Land Use Act and Other Extant Laws and Policies

The herder-farmer conflict, which is essentially a resource conflict, needs to be tackled through reviewing some existing provisions of the Land Use Act (1978), which placed management and control of all lands in the hands of state governors. Over time the divergent views between the federal and state governments on issues related to land usage such as open grazing and ranching have created the fodder for exacerbating this conflict dynamics. The Land Use Act and other laws and policies such as the 1965 gazetted Grazing Reserves and Cattle Routes of Northern Nigeria and the rejected National Grazing Reserve Bill (2016), among others, should be reviewed in consultation with all relevant stakeholders for a more sustainable and judicious land policy that caters for both farming communities and herders.

The National Livestock Transformation Plan (NLTP) and the National Pasture Development Programme (NAPDEP) should be made transparent and inclusive, to better address the concerns and needs of other citizens in the areas where these initiatives are sited.

4.4 Strengthen Judicial and Legislative Response

The importance of a strong judiciary in the fight against insecurity deserves utmost attention. Criminals cannot be prosecuted without the judiciary. However, the judiciary is in dire need of reform to strengthen it towards rendering justice swiftly, because justice as a deterrent against insecurity is presently lacking.

Criminal suspects are kept in prison for years awaiting trial, and even when trial begins, it takes ages to arrive at a sentence. The Chief of Defence Staff recently lamented that the weak judicial process was a hindrance to combating insecurity. Often the absence of justice or its belatedness has caused people to take laws into their own hands. Judicial reforms are therefore imperative. As the popular saying goes, justice delayed is justice denied.

The Legislature is vested with the constitutional powers to make laws and engage in oversight. Unfortunately, the legislature has been lacking in both regarding the security sector. There is an urgent need for the legislature to improve its use of oversight powers. Budgets, policies and conduct of the security sector and intelligence organisations deserve more scrutiny for better transparency and accountability and to foster inter-agency collaboration.

4.5 Strengthen Border Security

Significant clusters of security challenges in Nigeria are attributed to porous borders and inadequate boundary control systems. Uncontrolled border crossings make it difficult to determine who is a Nigerian citizen and who is not. Additionally, the porous borders allow for the smuggling of goods and services that are a threat to security.

It is recommended that a panel be set up to review the level of implementation of the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) National Border Management Strategy (2019- 2023) and to work on the next five-year strategy within the broad objectives of: Enhancing National Security, Contributing to National Economic Development, Reinforcing Social Harmony, Fulfilling International Agreements and Partnerships, and Ensuring Migrants' Human Rights and the Protection of Vulnerable Migrants. In doing this, it is imperative to actively ensure that the intelligence capabilities of the Migration Information and Data Analysis System (MIDAS) platform as a key tool for collecting, maintaining, and analysing border passage data for effective and efficient migration management is made functional and contributes to improvement in national security.

In addition, we recommend the creation of a border guard force focused on providing border security, as the current role is being performed by the Nigerian Customs Service which considers border security a secondary priority to its primary focus of revenue generation. Nigeria can look at examples such as the Border Security Force and the Frontier Force in India, the Pakistan Rangers in Pakistan, and the Border Security Agency in Malaysia, among others. In the meantime, the ongoing Joint Border Drill should be reorganised to make it a more proactive patrol and surveillance force.

Unofficial routes and footpaths like this outside Jibia town in Katsina State are often used for smuggling of arms from neighboring countries.

Photo credit: Abdulaziz Abdulaziz

4.6 Strengthen the Capacity of the National Boundary Commission

A conscious effort to review and revamp the capacity of the National Boundary Commission is recommended. To this end, the Presidency and the management of the National Boundary Commission should embark on a deliberate effort to strengthen the capacity and capability of the commission and its personnel towards meeting its mandate. Additionally, the commission needs to be adequately equipped (and held accountable) to identify the landowners, provide a mechanism to resolve land disputes (ownership, use, etc.) for individuals, communities, and organisations. Most of the inherent conflicts in many parts of Nigeria have their roots in land based/ resource-related conflicts among neighbouring communities.

4.7 Constructive Engagement of Unemployed and Unskilled Youths through Education and Vocational Training

To prevent non-state armed groups in identified hot spots from the continuous recruitment of vulnerable, unemployed, and out-of-school youths, we recommend that targeted employment, and vocational training opportunities be generated and sustained by each of the 36 states in Nigeria. This preventive initiative could be actualized through the establishment of state-funded safe and secured vocational training centres for skills acquisition nationwide. Priority should be given to skills linked to technology, agriculture, mining, entertainment, and sports. The Governors' Forum should include this as one of its focal areas so that it is a shared responsibility with both the states and federal government.

4.8 Undertake Strategic Defence and Security Sector Reform

The current security architecture of Nigeria may have once been effective in tackling the challenges at their time of institution. However, the challenges across the country have evolved significantly. First is the population explosion seen in Nigeria which now has approximately 200 million citizens that need to be protected. There are new domains of security threats including cyber and financial crimes, while smaller and largely benign groups have evolved into well-armed transnational insurgent groups. This means the security and defence structure that worked in prior dispensations are currently struggling to keep up with the evolved challenges. The need for a defence and security sector reform is imperative.

4.8.1 Security Sector Review

This should start with an urgent review of all Nigerian military, paramilitary, security forces and relevant ministries. This comprehensive Strategic National Defence and Security Sector Review (SDSSR) should produce a report which includes a comprehensive audit of security personnel, equipment, and facilities as a way of benchmarking what is available vis a vis what the country requires to deal with current insecurity manifestations. The various agencies' mission, organisation, training, and doctrine should also be reviewed to reflect the national threat dynamic.

4.8.2 Security Sector Streamline

The current security set up has several redundancies as multiple duplication of effort has been observed by experts. For instance, the various agencies operating in the maritime domain include: the Navy, Marine Police,

Houses and barns razed by bandits in Tungar Zarumai, Shanga LGA, Kebbi State

Army Amphibious Forces, and NIMASA. This duplication has been observed across other sectors including the intelligence, emergency response and law enforcement agencies. For a more efficient and agile sector, these forces must be streamlined, synchronised and their interventions better coordinated.

4.8.3 Undertake Security Sector Reorganisation

It is necessary to realign the country's national security architecture to a proactive, effective, and efficient framework and platform appropriate for anticipating and addressing security challenges in the country. To this end, the security structure should be reorganised in line with current challenges and peculiarities, and to block the current gaps that exist especially at the rural level. One effective way of doing this is to create appropriate platforms for addressing security challenges at the sub-national and regional levels.

One simple way to achieve this without the hassle of a constitutional review is for the law enforcement agencies to create decision-making structures at the regional levels for some security challenges. Another option is to form regional task forces to address regional threats. This is consistent with the notion that national security architecture is a combination of national policies, strategies and plans for securing life and property in the country, as well as the institutions and structures for their creation, management, and oversight. It includes the various individuals with responsibility for defining a nation's strategic security priorities, how to structure the institutions, ensuring they are resourced, coordinated, and evaluated. An effective and efficient security architecture will appropriately define Nigeria's security problem, prioritise objectives, define strategy, secure the involvement of the people, expand the force, enthrone institutional arrangements, and secure funding. A long-term strategy should include the decentralisation of policing functions through a review of the constitution to allow state and local government police structures. This should be done concurrently with the entrenchment of democratic tenets at the state and local levels to ensure that the state and local police structures have checks and balances to prevent their usage for purposes beyond policing.

4.8.4 Increase Security Sector Manpower

The current number of personnel in the Nigerian security forces is inadequate to secure the country. The ratio of one police to 400 citizens is the United Nations recommendation. However, according to the Nigeria Police Force (NPF)

data, as of 2018, there were approximately 222,000 policemen in the country[28]. If we take the national population to be 206,000,000 then the ratio of police to citizens is one police to 928 citizens, more than twice in deficit of the recommended number[29].

More highly skilled personnel are needed in the armed forces and intelligence services. Their efforts must be augmented with top-notch security technology for better efficiency. A national recruitment campaign should be instituted to increase the numbers of personnel. However, the policy and legislation should be reviewed to allow for shorter enlistment periods (4-5 years) with an option of higher salary in return for forfeiting pensions. A temporary recruitment agency could be set up to increase recruitment and training.

4.8.5 Increase the Role of Women in National Defence and Security

One research[30] conducted in Eastern Ukraine revealed that civilians were more willing to build dialogue with female officers because service women looked safer and could better understand the problems they were facing every day. The findings of this research are consistent with similar findings across other parts of the world, including a United Nations research[31] which showed that involving women in peace-building increases the probability that violence will end by 24%. Available data indicates that the number of female police officers in the Nigerian Police Force as of 2018 was 9.75%[32]. More needs to be done to increase the number of women operating in the security sector as doing so comes as a force multiplier with positive benefits to the force.

More countries' militaries are increasing the role of women in defence and security including in places such as Iraq and Afghanistan. Female officers possess certain skills which allow them to be more effective in dealing with the local communities. These include good communication, negotiation, dialogue, trust-building and the provision of other non-kinetic security functions to communities and vulnerable populations. Policies which focus on empowering women to move past victimisation and into leadership positions can provide the keys to establishing a more peaceful and stable society over time. However, enlisting more women means that safer work environments need to be created for women in security forces. In addition, women-only units should be established to assist in educating communities on the role of women in security and developing and deploying more female teams for tactical operations.

4.8.6 Enhance Security Sector Monitoring and Evaluation

Just as important is the introduction of a comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation framework which will be a constant barometer for the situation of the services and their respective needs, vis a vis the security situation in the country. The mechanism would also serve as an accountability framework to check abuses such as arms theft and corruption in general. This can be through introducing data gathering and collation as well as analysis to allow for the use of metrics in determining progress or lack of it. The National Planning Commission should engage the civil society and Nigeria's development partners to assist with the development of the capacity of security sector Ministries, Departments and Agencies in monitoring and evaluation and towards introducing adequate platforms for performing and determining these functions.

---

[28] Musa, Njadvara. "FG moves to meet the UN ratio on policing." The Guardian Nigeria, 24 December 2018, https://guardian.ng/news/fg-moves-to-meet-un-ratio-on-policing/. Accessed 29 September 2022.

[29] Kimani, Mary. "Security for the highest bidder | Africa Renewal." the United Nations, October 2009, https://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/october-2009/security-highest-bidder. Accessed 29 September 2022.

[30] Korotka, Yevheniia, and Serhii Morgunov. "#WPS20: The Crucial Role of Female Officers in Eastern Ukraine." Centre for Civilians in Conflict, 28 October 2020, https://civiliansinconflict.org/blog/wps20-the-crucial-role-of-female-officers-in-eastern-ukraine/. Accessed 29 September 2022.

[31] Stone, Laurel. "Can women make the world more peaceful? | Impact and effectiveness." The Guardian, 11 August 2014, https://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2014/aug/11/women-conflict-peace-society. Accessed 29 September 2022.

[32] Ibemere, David. "ICYMI... RipplesMetrics: Sokoto has the worst police-to-citizen ratio. Where does your State rank?" Ripples Nigeria, 17 May 2022, https://www.ripplesnigeria.com/ripplesmetrics-sokoto-has-the-worst-police-to-citizen-ratio-where-does-your-state-rank/. Accessed 30 September 2022

4.9 Enforcement and Review Of Official Secrets Act 1962

Despite the existence of the Official Secrets Act, Nigeria continues to record public disclosures of classified official documents including internal memos. Developments like this cause embarrassment to the country and the government depending on the nature of the disclosure. Such disclosures can also trigger security consequences including national panic. There is a perception among several Nigerians that the Freedom of Information Act made the Official Secret Act moribund. Therefore, we recommend that the National Assembly reviews the two Acts to ensure that they are consistent with Nigeria's national security aspirations and that unlawful disclosure of official documents is controlled, and noncompliance is penalised.

4.10 Accountability and Punitive Measures For Non-Performing Security Forces Personnel

For the Nigerian security sector, it has been long overdue to introduce and implement reforms that encapsulate monitoring and evaluation, performance reviews, reorientation, and key performance indicators in a bid to establish accountability. Reports of many attacks on civilians and correctional services have shown laxity and lack of swift response on the path of security personnel. Reforms geared towards accountability would address these.

In a similar vein, the excesses of violent state actors cannot continue unchecked. The reckless impunity they operate with is an affront to the sovereignty of Nigeria and our security agencies. The need for punitive measures of various degrees to penalise such criminals and their accomplices is thus recommended. Synergy with the judiciary is necessary for these measures to contain punishment for every form of criminality and be utilised. Non-compliance with rules, regulations, and policies by personnel of security sector organisations and the widespread allegations of abuse of rules of engagement and heavy handedness continue to chip away at the legitimacy of the security organisations and their personnel. This shortcoming creates support for terrorist and militant groups in communities when they perceive that those who are to protect them are now their oppressors. It is therefore imperative that discipline and compliance functions are strengthened in all the organisations so that erring personnel are sanctioned. For the police, the role of the Police Service Commission is significant.

5.11 Strengthening Intelligence Management

Intelligence operations are currently service based and decentralised, and this is partly responsible for the inadequacies in the management of intelligence for effective security operations. We recommend integration of all services intelligence resources and decentralising of the management of such data. This could be done through creation of a national platform that would enable seamless collection and dissemination of intelligence. Other available resources must be integrated, like the recently introduced community police structure or state police (if eventually created) for a more organic grassroots intelligence drive.

5.12 Regulation of Irregular Security Outfits across the Country

Local irregular security groups possess advantages that can be useful to the national security architecture. They have the trust of the locals whom they protect, and they possess ample knowledge of the grassroots terrain. Local irregular security groups such as the Civilian Joint Task Force, (CJTF) or hunters' associations have shown impressive operational effectiveness. However, their activities must be better regulated for government oversight.

This can be done by conducting a comprehensive audit of existing local and state level vigilantes. The aim of this audit is to provide a better understanding of the number, size, strength, capacity, and capabilities of these irregular security groups.

Information derived from this audit will assist the Federal Government in determining how best to incorporate these groups into the national security infrastructure. For instance, some might be effective in border security, maritime security, forest security and/or counter insurgency forces. Another strategy could be the integration of these outfits into the private security sector which already has Federal Government regulation and oversight. The government can also investigate the possibility of merging these volunteer forces and organising them into something like the Pakistan Frontier Corps for effectiveness and efficiency. In addition, the local government areas should reactivate and empower Local Government Security Committees to enable a unified response at the local level.

4.13 Control Of Arms And Light Weapons

4.13.1 Regulation of Local Arms Industry

Illicit circulation of Small Arms and Light Weapons have contributed significantly to the killings of innocent Nigerians and existence of violent groups across Nigeria. While the porous border contributes significantly to this phenomenon, it is important to note that locally manufactured arms which are fabricated in small scale, and local factories that operate without permits also account for a large percentage of arms in circulation across the country.

Therefore, it is important to establish policies for proper regulation, tracking and management of these weapons at each state of the weapons lifecycle including from production, sales/distribution, and stockpiling of local arms manufacturers.

4.13.2 Stricter Government Security Personnel's' Weapons Handling and Management

An official government report released in 2019 revealed the disappearance of 178,459 pieces of armaments from the armouries of the Nigeria Police Force without any formal report of their whereabouts. Out of this figure, 88,078 AK-47 rifles and 3,907 assorted rifles and pistols could not be accounted for, neither were they reported to any higher authority[33]. Weapon handling and management in government security agencies should be systemic, taking advantage of technology for effectiveness. The current practice where security personnel keep weapons in their private homes should be discontinued. There should be deliberate policy to ensure weapons are deposited in secure and safe armouries and weapons stores for accountability.

Aftermath of bandit attack in Tungar Zarumai, Shanga LGA, Kebbi State

---

[33] Vanguard Newspaper published the report from the Auditor General of the Federation in 2019, referencing this. Auditor-General of the Federation. "178459 missing Police weapons." Vanguard News, 25 January 2022, https://www.vanguardngr.com/2022/01/178459-missing-police-weapons/. Accessed 30 September 2022.

4.13.3 Arms Mop-Up

The vast weapons in circulation must be mopped up as part of security coordination efforts. Although this will involve kinetic operations such as armed raids, other non-kinetic options can be used as well, such as adopting a money/grant-for-arms approach. This is a sufficient incentive that could encourage citizens to turn in their arms for educational or business opportunities.

4.13.4 Enhance Current Government Anti-SALW Efforts

In 2021, President Buhari approved the establishment of the National Centre for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (NCCSALW). The centre is domiciled in the Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA) and replaced the defunct Presidential Committee on Small Arms and Light Weapons. The centre is the institutional mechanism for policy guidance, research, and monitoring of all aspects of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) in Nigeria. Its pioneer head is Rtd. Major General A.M. Dikko.

To further underscore his commitment to tackle arms proliferation, President Buhari presented an executive bill - the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons Bill - to the National Assembly in 2021. The bill seeks to establish a National Centre for the Control of the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons in Nigeria, and had the following aims: Control the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in Nigeria; Provide a framework for the coordination, implementation and monitoring of all efforts geared towards the control of small arms and light weapons in Nigeria; and prevent, combat, and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

In July 2022, the Senate passed a bill that sought to establish the National Commission for the Coordination and Control of the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs). The bill passed is a consolidation of three bills including the Nigerian National Commission against the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (Establishment) Bill, 2020 (SB. 283), the Nigerian National Commission against the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (Establishment) Bill, 2020 (SB. 513). and the National Centre for the Coordination and Control of the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (Establishment) Bill, 2021 (SB. 794).

It is therefore recommended that the House of Representatives takes a cue from the Senate to accelerate the passage of the bill after which the two chambers should harmonise the bills and present same to the president for his assent within the lifespan of the 9th Assembly to avoid previous instances in the 8th Assembly when similar efforts failed to be completed.

4.14 Engagement of Private Military Contractors, Veterans and Private Security Industry

It is a known fact that Nigeria's security personnel are overstretched due to the persistent and widespread nature of current security challenges. This deficiency has allowed insecurity to fester. To relieve the security forces and to enable significant efforts to be applied to degrade the threats, the government should consider inviting private security contractors, as it was done shortly before the general election in 2015, to confront armed banditry in the North-West and North-Central regions. The engagement should be handled through the security forces to assuage concerns amongst some quarters that the private military contractors are an indication of the non-appreciation by the political class of the security forces' contribution and sacrifice. In doing this, clear objectives and measurement parameters should be set and monitored closely.

5 Conclusion

5. Conclusion

Nigeria is faced with a myriad of security challenges. The visible security threats to the country are terrorism and insurgency, militancy, banditry, separatist agitations, kidnap for ransom; and lots more. The perpetrators of these crimes and insecurity in the country employ kidnapping and mass abduction, serial and ritual killings, pipeline vandalism and oil theft, destruction of farms, propaganda, and the laying of IEDs, among other strategies designed and employed to achieve their objectives and further polarise the Nigerian state.

The outcome of these manifestations is a highly insecure Nigerian society. The people across all parts of Nigeria, particularly in the rural areas where the brunt of the security challenges is felt most, are unsafe. To address insecurity in Nigeria, we have presented a multi-sectoral and multidimensional approach that is layered and that seeks to block structural gaps that are the drivers of insecurity in Nigeria. Finally, it is certainly not escapist to say that all hope is not lost for Nigeria. If the necessary measures are employed in time and place, insecurity will be well addressed, if not totally eradicated.

Displaced villagers in their new abode in an abandoned warehouse at Mayanci village, Maru LGA in Zamfara State.

Photo credit: Abdulaziz Abdulaziz
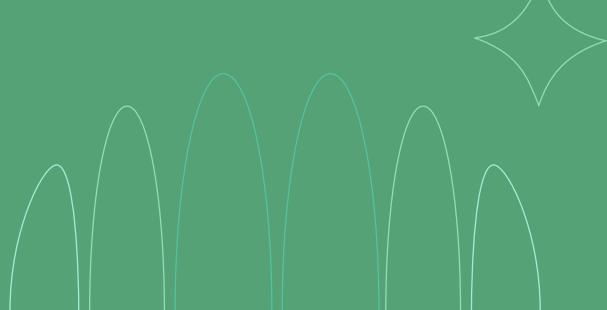
6 Implementation Timelines

6. Implementation Timelines

Short Term:
3 - 6 months

Medium Term:
6 - 12 months

Long Term:
12 months and above

Action	Implementation Strategy	Timeline	Responsible Party (Civil Servants, Technocrats and Political Appointees)	Expected Outcome
Prioritise Dialogue and Soft-Approach to Conflict Resolution	The Federal Government should produce a National Dialogue and Peace Initiative as well as a framework for centralised handling of problems such as banditry, communal clashes, and farmer/herder conflicts.	Medium Term	Presidency, ONSA, State Governments, Institute of Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR)	A more centralised dialogue process
Enhance the role of Traditional Justice Mechanisms	Enact laws at the state levels that would guide and give legal effect to conflict resolution through the traditional institutions. To check abuses, there should be a central regulatory body in the mould of Judicial Service Commission.	Medium Term	National Assembly, State governments; Civil society, legislature	Speedy dispensation of justice; nipping crises in the bud; a more robust monitoring and reporting mechanism for conflicts.
National trauma healing and victim reparation	Move the National Trauma Centre to the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management and expand its scope to cover all victims of conflicts through a comprehensive management synergy with states and agencies responsible.	Short term	Presidency, National Assembly, National Hospital, Abuja; Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management; Development partners	Psychological therapy for victims of violence; rehabilitation and ensuring victims are cured from tendencies of vengeance or relapse into criminal past.

Action	Implementation Strategy	Timeline	Responsible Party (Civil Servants, Technocrats and Political Appointees)	Expected Outcome
Improve Use of Strategic Communications	Revival of the Forum of Spokespersons of Security Agencies and anchor it in the Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA) for proactive engagement with citizens and coordination among sister organisations.	Short term	Presidency, ONSA; Public Relations Unit of Security and Intelligence Agencies; Federal Ministry of Information	Turning the tide of the narratives around the security agencies, especially countering terrorists' propaganda.
Review of Land Use Act and other extant laws and policies	Engage the National Assembly and the Nigerian Governors Forum for a thorough review of the Land Use Act to address issues of judicious sharing and usage of land	Medium term	Presidency, National Assembly through relevant ministries and agencies; State governors; other stakeholders	Resolve communal clashes over farming rights and herder/ farmer conflicts.
Strengthen Judicial and Legislative Response	Hold an inter-agency review of existing legal frameworks for a comprehensive identification of legal and judicial gaps that need to be firmed up.	Medium term	National Assembly, the Judiciary, Federal Ministry of Justice, ONSA, development partners, CSOs	Firmer and universal legal provisions that will provide effective frameworks for tackling insecurity.

Action	Implementation Strategy	Timeline	Responsible Party (Civil Servants, Technocrats and Political Appointees)	Expected Outcome
Strengthen Border Security	Set up a panel to review the level of implementation of the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) National Border Management Strategy: 2019 – 2023 Create strategic objectives focusing on strategy within the broad objectives of: Enhancing National Security, Contributing to National Economic Development, Reinforcing Social Harmony, Fulfilling International Agreements and Partnerships, and Ensuring Migrants' Human Rights and the Protection of Vulnerable Migrants. Create a border guard force focused on providing border security. Reorganise ongoing joint border drill for more proactive patrols and surveillance.	Medium term	ONSA; Nigeria Immigration Service; Ministry of Interior; Nigeria Customs Service; Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Federal Ministry of Justice; National Assembly	Reduced inflow of small and light weapons, illegal migration, and smuggling.
Strengthen the capacity of the National Boundary Commission	Review operations of the National Boundary Commission Strengthen its capacity and capability to: Identify landowners Devise mechanisms to resolve land disputes	Medium term	NBC; National Assembly; Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation	Resolution of inter-communal conflicts.

Action	Implementation Strategy	Timeline	Responsible Party (Civil Servants, Technocrats and Political Appointees)	Expected Outcome
Constructive engagement of unemployed and unskilled youths through education and vocational training	Establish state-funded vocational training centres for skills acquisition in the areas of technology, agriculture, mining, entertainment, and sports. State governments should take greater ownership and responsibility for this endeavour	Medium term	NDE; SMEDAN; State governments; development partners	Disengagement of youths from criminal activities or from being recruited into sinister organisations.
Strategic Defence and Security Sector Reform	Key stakeholders must agree on security sector reform objectives and desired end goals	Short term	National Assembly, ONSA; security and intelligence agencies	Comprehensive and functional security sector architecture.
Security Sector Review	Review all Nigerian military, paramilitary, security forces and relevant ministries. Produce a comprehensive Strategic National Defence and Security Sector Review (SDSSR) report which includes a comprehensive audit of security personnel, equipment, and facilities. Review the various agency's missions, organisation, training, doctrine vis a vis the current national threat dynamic.	Medium term	National Assembly, Presidency, ONSA, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Police Affairs, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Justice, Development Partners	A citizen centred security architecture that is effective and efficient.

Action	Implementation Strategy	Timeline	Responsible Party (Civil Servants, Technocrats and Political Appointees)	Expected Outcome
Security Sector Streamline	Streamline duplicate agencies, merge, or dissolve those that are currently irrelevant or redundant as recommended by the Oronsaye Report.	Medium term	National Assembly, Presidency, Development	Reduce redundancies and duplication of functions and promote efficiency as well as allow enhanced coordination and cooperation.
Security Sector Reorganisation	Create regional task forces with regional organisational hierarchy to tackle regional and state level threats/emergency response	Long term	Presidency, ONSA, Ministries of Defence, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Police Affairs, Ministry of Communications and Digital Economy, Ministry Science and Technology	A citizen centred security architecture that is effective and efficient.
Increase Security Sector Manpower	Set up a national recruitment campaign to recruit skilled personnel into the services. Increase the use of technology as a force multiplier. Review current policies to allow for shorter enlistment periods (4-5 years) with an option of higher salary in return for forgetting pensions	Short term	Presidency, ONSA, Ministries of Defence, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Police Affairs and Police Service Commission, Ministry of Communications and Digital Economy, Ministry Science and Technology, Ministry of Budget and Planning	Adequate boots on ground enough to overwhelm the enemies and convergence of human and technological capabilities for a more effective and efficient.

Action	Implementation Strategy	Timeline	Responsible Party (Civil Servants, Technocrats and Political Appointees)	Expected Outcome
Increase the Role of Women in National Defence and Security	Review policies to allow for increased roles of women in security leadership. Set up female only-security and defence teams focused on community relationship building. Replicate and enhance existing structures in the Nigerian Armed Forces, police and some of intelligence and paramilitary organisations and across the remaining security and intelligence MDAs that are yet to embrace a gender positive philosophy. Establish units focused on education of gender roles while mainstreaming a women's positive lens in the security sector.	Medium term	ONSA; Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Women Affairs, National Assembly	Close gender gaps in security policies and utilise women finding solutions to security threats.
Enhance Security Sector Monitoring and Evaluation	Increase the use of data and metrics to determine progress. The National Planning Commission should engage civil society and Nigeria's development partners to assist in developing the capacity of the civilian component of security sector MDAs.	Medium term	ONSA; Ministry of Defence; Ministry of Budget and Planning, Development Partners, National Assembly	Better coordination and accountability.

Action	Implementation Strategy	Timeline	Responsible Party (Civil Servants, Technocrats and Political Appointees)	Expected Outcome
Review of Official Secrets Act 1962:	The National Assembly should review the Freedom of Information Act and the Official Secrets Act to ensure they are consistent with the current aspirations of Nigeria's national security objectives and our democratic aspirations.	Medium term	National Assembly, Presidency, Ministry of Justice and Nigerian Bar Association, Ministry of Information and National Human Rights Commission	Tighten confidentiality of official secrets.
Accountability and Punitive Measures for Non-Performance:	Using the accountability spectrum, create standards and performance measurement platforms as well as various degrees of consequences that penalise excesses of violent state actors and their accomplices.

Synergy with the judiciary is necessary for these measures to contain punishment for every form of criminality and be utilised.

Appoint a Standards and Compliance Function or an Ombudsman in various aspects of the security and intelligence sector. | Short Term | Presidency, ONSA, Defence Headquarters; Ministry of Police Affairs, Ministry of Interior, National Assembly, Ministry of Budget, and Planning | Accountability for action and inaction which will then engender effectiveness and efficiency. |
| Strengthening Intelligence Management | Management structure should be decentralised to better address threats on a regional level

Having a functional intelligence fusion centre centrally and across the geopolitical zones | Medium Term | Presidency, ONSA (The Intelligence Community); Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Police Affairs, | Proactive management of crises. |

Action	Implementation Strategy	Timeline	Responsible Party (Civil Servants, Technocrats and Political Appointees)	Expected Outcome
Regulation of Irregular Security Outfits Across the Country	Conduct a comprehensive audit of all existing federal, state, and local governments' security outfits such as task forces and vigilantes to understand the number, size, strength, capacity, and capabilities of existing groups. Implement existing provisions in the mandates of the Police, The NSCDC and other security MDAs to ensure the incorporation of these security outfits in the national security architecture.	Short Term	Presidency, ONSA; Ministry for Police of Affairs, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Budget, and Planning,	Cut off proliferation of irregular security outfits and utilise the existing ones in a more organised way.
Control of Arms and Light Weapons	Establish, strengthen, and review policies that dictate the regulation, tracking, and management of weapons along the lifecycle from: production, sales/distribution and stockpiling of local arms manufacturers. Arising from the above, integrate these into the Defence Industry Corporation.	Short Term	National Assembly, Presidency, ONSA, National Centre for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (NCCSALW), Defence Industry Corporation (DICON)	Reduce armed conflict and violence.

Action	Implementation Strategy	Timeline	Responsible Party (Civil Servants, Technocrats and Political Appointees)	Expected Outcome
Stricter Government Security Personnel's Weapons Handling and Management	Conduct an audit to determine the integrity of existing armouries and the need for new ones. Ensure weapons are deposited in secured and safe armouries and weapons stores for accountability. Introduce weapons management system which incorporates technology and allows for accountability	Short term ⏱	Presidency, ONSA; National Centre for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (NCCSALW); Office of the Auditor General of the Federation	Reduce armed conflict and violence
Arms Mop Up	In addition to kinetic operations such as armed raids, other non-kinetic options should be adopted such as a money/grant for arms approach. Weapons can be turned in, in exchange for educational grants or business capital.	Short term ⏱	ONSA, Ministry of Police Affairs, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Budget and Planning, National Assembly	Reduction in illegal arms in the hands of non-state actors

Action	Implementation Strategy	Timeline	Responsible Party (Civil Servants, Technocrats and Political Appointees)	Expected Outcome
Enhance Current Government Anti-SALW Efforts	Create a framework for the coordination, implementation and monitoring of all efforts and federal and state government levels geared towards the control of small arms and light weapons in Nigeria. The House of Representatives should work with the Senate to accelerate the passage of the National Commission for the Coordination and Control of the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs) Bill. The bill passed by the Senate is a consolidation of three bills including the Nigerian National Commission against the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (Establishment) Bill, 2020(SB. 283), the Nigerian National Commission against the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (Establishment) Bill, 2020 (SB. 513). and the National Centre for the Coordination and Control of the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (Establishment) Bill, 2021 (SB. 794). The two chambers should harmonise the bills and present to the Executive for assent within the lifespan of the 9th Assembly.	Short term	ONSA, Ministry of Interior, National Centre for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (NCCSALW), National Assembly.	Tightening access of non-state actors and private individuals to arms and light weapons.

Action	Implementation Strategy	Timeline	Responsible Party (Civil Servants, Technocrats and Political Appointees)	Expected Outcome
Engagement of Private Military Contractors, Veterans and Private Security Industry:	Conduct and audit of all retired and dismissed security and intelligence personnel to develop a database showing their current activities. The government to invite private security contractors to support public security sector efforts including in the ongoing counter insurgency and counter terrorism and as well as anti banditry operations in country. This support can be in field operations as well as other security multiplier roles. In addition, the roles of military and intelligence veterans as well as the private security industry should be incorporated into the national security architecture. National strategic think tanks should be tasked with the generation of rigorous policy recommendations, supporting the creation of strategy and policy implementation guidelines and reviewing strategy and policy implementation.	Short Term	Presidency, ONSA, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Police Affairs, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Justice, National Assembly	Block gaps in the current security architecture and strengthen security functions.

Authors' Bios

Dr. Kabir Adamu is an Enterprise Security Risk Management and Intelligence specialist with a focus on Nigeria and the Sahel region. He is the managing director of Beacon Consulting, a security consulting firm based in Abuja. He has consulted on security for a range of national and multinational organisations, especially those operating in hostile, challenging, and complex environments. Licensed and affiliated to many professional organisations, he is a fellow of the Risk Managers Society of Nigeria (RIMSON); a Fellow of the Emergency, Crisis and Disaster Risk Management Institute (ECRMI); a Fellow of the International Institute of Professional Security, Nigeria (ISCA); a full member of the American Society for Industrial Security (ASIS International), the leading organization for security professionals worldwide; and a full member of the Security Institute, United Kingdom.

Major General B.M. Shafa (Rtd) was until recently a seasoned Military Intelligence staff with about 30 years of active service experience. During his career, he held several command, staff and instructional appointments including Director of Operation at the Defence Intelligence Agency, Principal Staff Officer (CoS) to Chief of Army Staff and Commander 2 Division Intelligence Brigade. He was the pioneer Coordinator of Operation Safe Corridor responsible for deradicalization, rehabilitation and reintegration of surrendered Boko Haram combatants. His last appointment before retirement was Chief of Transformation and Innovation (Army). He is currently the Chief Executive Officer of MID Consulting Services, a security consulting firm with specialization in security sector reforms, peacebuilding and election security matters.

Ms Tanwa Ashiru is an award-winning Enterprise Security Risk Consultant and the founder of Bulwark Intelligence Solutions, a top enterprise security risk management company in Africa. She is a U.S Air Force veteran and has over 18 years of experience in intelligence analysis. She worked in the U.S Department of Defense (DoD), and the U.S National Security Agency (NSA). She served for 180 days in Afghanistan and was involved in counter-insurgency, counter IED and counter-terrorism operations in Southwest Asia, Middle East and Africa. She holds an M.A in Intelligence Studies from the School of Security and Global Studies at American Military University (AMU), West Virginia, USA. She is a Fellow of the Association of Enterprise Risk Management Professionals (AERMP) and was recognized as the "Best Female Security Personality of the Year 2021" by ASIS International Lagos Chapter. She was the convener of the first ever Women in Security Conference in Lagos, Nigeria. She has provided services for various public and private sector organisations including NATO, Nigerian DIA, DSS, NIA, U.S Army Africa Forces (USARAF), U.S Embassy Abuja and many more. She features regularly in local and international media organisations, proffering professional opinions on security, intelligence, defence, and cyber related topics.

Mr. Abdulaziz Abdulaziz is an award-winning investigative journalist with over 15 years' experience in print and online journalism. He has reported for publications such as LEADERSHIP, Blueprint, The Guardian (UK), Aljazeera English and PREMIUM TIMES. He is currently the Deputy General Editor of the Daily Trust newspapers in Abuja. He also spent some years in youths and pro-democracy advocacies. As a journalist, Abdulaziz has reported extensively on governance, politics and development, among others, and has won accolades for his accountability journalism and coverage of the banditry conflict in Northern Nigeria. He is the first journalist to travel to the dens of the bandits to meet some of the key actors at the centre of the crisis. His documentary on the conflict: 'Nigerian Banditry: The Inside Story' was described as an original eye-opener on the issue. He holds a Bachelor's and a Master of Arts degrees in English from the Bayero University, Kano. He won the Wole Soyinka Award for Investigative Reporting (2018) and was nominated for the Outstanding Investigative Reporting category of Fetisov Journalism Awards (2019), among others. He is a fellow of the Edward Murrow Programme of the US Department of State.
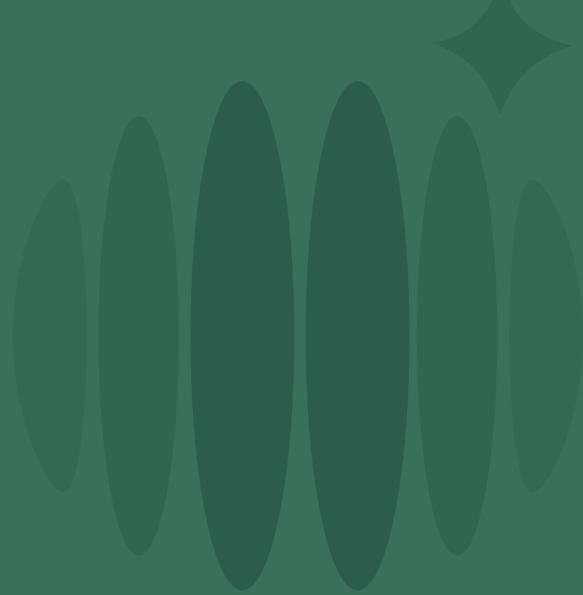
About Agora Policy

Agora Policy is a Nigerian think tank and non-profit committed to finding practical solutions to urgent national challenges. We conduct policy research, facilitate frank and purposeful dialogues, and build capacity for governance, policy and advocacy.

About the IIAPP Project

The Informed, Inclusive and Accountable Public Policies (IIAPP) project is designed to achieve three things: one, to maximise the opportunity provided by the electioneering and transition periods and beyond to sustain attention on and further mainstream transparency, accountability, gender equity and social inclusion into policy and governance discourse in Nigeria; two, to generate original and credible evidence before, during and after the 2023 elections to focus the attention of the country on key policy areas and, ultimately, the adoption of sensible, inclusive and effective policies on key national challenges; and three, to deepen the capacity of state and non-state actors to undertake evidence-driven policy analysis, design, implementation and advocacy. The IIAPP is supported by the MacArthur Foundation.

AGORA POLICY

With Support of

MacArthur Foundation