

**THE DYNAMICS AND IMPACTS OF EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL SECURITY ON
NIGERIA SINCE BABANGIDA ADMINISTRATION**

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Abstract

This paper examines Nigeria's security dynamics since the Babangida administration, focusing on the interplay between internal and external security factors. Drawing upon Securitization Theory as a theoretical framework, the study analyses how security threats are constructed, framed, and responded to by state actors. Through a comprehensive review of academic literature, governmental reports, and expert analyses, the paper elucidates the complexities of Nigeria's security environment and explores potential avenues for sustainable peace and stability. Findings highlight the securitization of issues such as ethno-religious conflicts, insurgencies, and transnational crimes, leading to militarized responses and governance challenges. Recommendations include promoting inclusive dialogue, strengthening governance institutions, investing in socio-economic development, enhancing regional cooperation, promoting human rights, and investing in community policing and conflict prevention. Ultimately, the paper underscores the imperative of adopting a holistic and multi-dimensional approach to security governance in Nigeria.

Keywords: Security Dynamics, Internal Security, External Security, Ethno-religious Conflicts, Transnational Crimes, Regional Cooperation,

Introduction

The administration of General Ibrahim Babangida from 1985 to 1993 played a pivotal role in shaping Nigeria's security landscape, amidst significant political, economic, and social transformations. Babangida's era was marked by the emergence of diverse security challenges, ranging from internal conflicts to external pressures, which continue to reverberate in Nigeria's contemporary context. Ethno-religious conflicts, such as those witnessed in the Middle Belt region and the Niger Delta, highlighted deep-seated societal tensions and governance deficiencies exacerbated by historical legacies and political marginalization (Adibe, 2017). Additionally, the rise of militant groups like the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons exacerbated insecurity and undermined state authority, posing formidable challenges to governance and development (Ojo, 2020).

Furthermore, Babangida's administration grappled with external security threats, including border disputes, cross-border crimes, and regional conflicts, which strained Nigeria's relations with neighbouring countries and regional organizations. The protracted crisis in the Lake Chad Basin, exacerbated by the activities of Boko Haram, underscored the interconnectedness of internal and external security dynamics and the imperative of regional cooperation in addressing transnational security challenges (Ibrahim, 2019). By dissecting the dynamics and ramifications of these security challenges, this paper aims to provide insights into Nigeria's security trajectory since the Babangida era and inform policy responses to promote sustainable peace and stability in the country.

Historical context

Nigeria's security challenges have deep historical roots, with colonial legacies, ethno-religious diversity, and post-independence political developments shaping the nation's security landscape. The legacy of British colonialism left a legacy of socio-economic disparities and ethnic tensions, which have persisted into the post-independence period, exacerbating internal divisions (Ibrahim, 2019). For instance, data from the National Bureau of Statistics indicates that Nigeria's poverty rate stood at 40.1% in 2019, reflecting widespread economic inequality that contributes to social unrest and instability (National Bureau of Statistics, 2019). Additionally, the Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970) further deepened divisions, particularly between the Igbo-dominated southeastern region and the rest of the country, laying the groundwork for subsequent security challenges (Adibe, 2017). Against this historical backdrop, the Babangida administration faced a nation grappling with internal strife and external pressures, necessitating strategic responses to address security threats and promote stability.

The Babangida era witnessed the emergence of various security challenges, both internal and external, which posed significant threats to Nigeria's stability and development. Ethno-religious conflicts, such as the Maitatsine uprising in the early 1980s and the Zango-Kataf crisis in 1992, underscored the fragility of Nigeria's social fabric and governance structures (Ojo, 2020). Moreover, the administration contended with external security pressures, including border disputes, transnational crimes, and regional conflicts, which strained Nigeria's relations with neighboring countries and regional organizations (Adibe, 2017). Statistical data from the Global Terrorism Index highlights the severity of Nigeria's security challenges, with the country consistently ranking among the top countries affected by terrorism in recent years (Global

Terrorism Index, 2020). In this context, the Babangida administration faced the formidable task of navigating internal and external security threats while promoting national unity and socioeconomic development.

Internal Security Dynamics

Internal security challenges in Nigeria have been multifaceted and persistent, encompassing ethnoreligious conflicts, insurgencies, and criminal activities that have undermined state authority and communal harmony. The proliferation of ethnic militias like the O'odua People's Congress (OPC) and the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) has posed significant threats to stability, particularly in regions marked by resource disputes and political marginalization (Adibe, 2017). Moreover, the emergence of Boko Haram in the early 2000s escalated the security crisis to unprecedented levels, unleashing waves of violence and instability across the country (Ibrahim, 2019). Statistical data from the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) reveals that Nigeria experienced over 2,000 conflict events related to insurgency and communal violence in 2020 alone, highlighting the severity and complexity of internal security threats (ACLED, 2021).

The government's responses to internal security challenges have varied, ranging from military crackdowns to peace negotiations and amnesty programs. While some initiatives have led to shortterm gains in reducing violence, others have been criticized for exacerbating grievances and entrenching cycles of conflict (Ojo, 2020). For example, the government's militarized approach to addressing the Boko Haram insurgency has been met with mixed success, with periodic flare-ups of violence underscoring the limitations of purely military solutions (Ibrahim, 2019). Additionally, peace negotiations and amnesty programs aimed at disarming ethnic militias have faced challenges in ensuring long-term peace and reconciliation, highlighting the complexity of addressing underlying socio-economic and political grievances (Adibe, 2017).

External Security Dynamics

Nigeria's external security challenges have been profoundly influenced by regional dynamics, including border disputes, cross-border crimes, and foreign interventions. The protracted crisis in the Lake Chad Basin, exacerbated by the activities of Boko Haram and other militant groups, has strained Nigeria's relations with neighbouring countries and regional organizations (Ojo, 2020). Statistical data from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) indicates that Nigeria serves as a significant transit point for illicit activities, with an estimated 40% of illicit firearms in West Africa originating from Nigeria (UNODC, 2018). Moreover, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons across porous borders has fuelled transnational crimes, such as human trafficking and drug smuggling, further undermining Nigeria's security architecture and regional stability.

The external security dynamics facing Nigeria underscore the interconnectedness of security challenges across national borders and the imperative of regional cooperation in addressing transnational threats. Efforts to enhance border security, strengthen regional cooperation mechanisms, and promote information sharing are essential for mitigating external security risks and promoting stability in the Lake Chad Basin region (Ibrahim, 2019). Moreover, diplomatic engagement with neighbouring countries and regional organizations is crucial for fostering trust, resolving border disputes, and coordinating joint security operations to combat transnational

crimes. By addressing external security challenges in a collaborative and multilateral manner, Nigeria can enhance its capacity to safeguard national sovereignty, protect citizens, and promote regional peace and stability.

Impact on Governance and Development

The intersection of internal and external security challenges has had profound impacts on governance effectiveness and socio-economic development in Nigeria. Persistent insecurity has significantly eroded public trust in government institutions and undermined confidence in the ability of the state to provide security and basic services (Ojo, 2020). This erosion of governance legitimacy has hindered investment and economic growth, as both domestic and foreign investors are deterred by the perceived risks associated with insecurity (Ibrahim, 2019). Statistical data from the World Bank indicates that Nigeria's GDP growth rate averaged just 1.8% between 2015 and 2020, reflecting the adverse impact of insecurity on economic performance and development (World Bank, 2021). Moreover, the diversion of resources towards security expenditures has constrained public spending on essential services such as education, healthcare, and infrastructure, perpetuating cycles of poverty and marginalization in conflict-affected regions (Adibe, 2017).

The implications of insecurity for governance and development in Nigeria underscore the urgent need for holistic approaches to address security challenges and promote sustainable peace and stability. Efforts to enhance governance effectiveness, transparency, and accountability are essential for rebuilding public trust and confidence in government institutions (Ibrahim, 2019). Moreover, investments in conflict prevention, peacebuilding, and socio-economic development are crucial for addressing root causes of insecurity and fostering resilience in conflict-affected communities (Adibe, 2017). By prioritizing inclusive governance, inclusive development, and conflict-sensitive approaches to policymaking, Nigeria can mitigate the impacts of insecurity, promote socio-economic progress, and build a more resilient and inclusive society.

Materials and Methods used

This section provides a comprehensive delineation of the material and methods utilized in the study to investigate the dynamics and impacts of external and internal security on Nigeria since Babangida Administration. To ensure a rigorous and systematic analysis, we employed a multifaceted approach encompassing various sources of data, data collection techniques and analytical methodologies.

Research Design: This study adopts a qualitative research design to delve into the intricate dynamics and ramifications of external and internal security challenges on Nigeria since the era of Babangida administration. Qualitative research offers a well-suited approach for examining multifaceted phenomena like security dynamics, enabling researchers to conduct nuanced analyses of contextual intricacies and diverse viewpoints. Through methods such as interviews, content analysis, and case studies, qualitative research facilitates the exploration of complex interrelationships, underlying causes, and socio-political implications of security issues in Nigeria. By embracing a qualitative approach, this study aims to provide comprehensive insights into the evolving nature of security challenges in Nigeria and contribute to a deeper understanding of the complexities surrounding security governance and peacebuilding efforts in the country.

Data Collection: For this study, data collection was conducted through an extensive examination of diverse sources, including academic literature, governmental reports, policy documents, and

expert analyses pertaining to Nigeria's security landscape. By synthesizing information from secondary sources, the study aimed to gain a holistic understanding of the historical context, evolving dynamics, and policy implications of security challenges since the Babangida administration. Moreover, the inclusion of primary sources such as official statements and interviews with security experts and stakeholders offered valuable insights into contemporary security challenges and governmental perspectives, enriching the depth and breadth of the analysis. Through this multi-faceted approach to data collection, the study sought to provide a comprehensive and nuanced examination of Nigeria's security environment, contributing to scholarly understanding and policy discourse in the field of security studies.

Sources of Data: The sources of data for this study encompassed a diverse range of materials, including academic literature, governmental reports, policy documents, and expert analyses, offering a comprehensive overview of Nigeria's security landscape. Academic literature provided valuable theoretical frameworks, historical context, and empirical studies relevant to understanding the dynamics and impact of internal and external security challenges in Nigeria since the Babangida administration. Governmental reports and policy documents offered insights into official perspectives, policy responses, and governance structures related to security governance and crisis management. Additionally, expert analyses from think tanks, research institutes, and media outlets provided nuanced interpretations and real-time assessments of contemporary security issues, enriching the depth and breadth of the study's analysis. Furthermore, interviews with security experts and stakeholders offered first-hand insights, perspectives, and experiences related to security challenges and governance practices in Nigeria, enhancing the study's empirical grounding and contributing to a more holistic understanding of the subject matter. Through the integration of these diverse sources of data, this study aimed to provide a comprehensive and nuanced analysis of Nigeria's security dynamics, contributing to scholarly understanding and informing policy discourse in the field of security studies.

Data Collection Techniques: The data collection techniques employed in this study encompassed both qualitative and quantitative approaches to ensure a comprehensive understanding of Nigeria's security dynamics since the Babangida administration. Qualitative techniques such as document analysis, including academic literature reviews, governmental reports, policy documents, and expert analyses, allowed for an in-depth exploration of contextual factors, policy responses, and diverse perspectives related to internal and external security challenges. Additionally, qualitative methods such as interviews with security experts and stakeholders provided valuable firsthand insights, experiences, and nuanced interpretations of contemporary security issues in Nigeria. Complementing these qualitative techniques, quantitative methods such as statistical analysis of relevant data, including socio-economic indicators and conflict-related statistics, offered empirical evidence and contextual insights into the scale, scope, and trends of security challenges over time. By employing a combination of qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques, this study aimed to provide a comprehensive and robust analysis of Nigeria's security dynamics, enriching scholarly understanding and informing policy discourse in the field of security studies.

Historical Analysis: The historical analysis conducted in this study served to contextualize Nigeria's contemporary security challenges within broader historical trajectories, encompassing colonial legacies, post-independence political developments, and socio-economic factors. By tracing the evolution of security dynamics over time, this approach allowed for a deeper understanding of the root causes and historical continuities that underpin current security challenges. Through this historical lens, the study aimed to illuminate how past events and

structural factors have shaped Nigeria's security landscape, providing valuable insights into the persistence and complexity of internal and external security threats facing the country. By contextualizing contemporary security challenges within their historical context, the study contributes to a nuanced understanding of Nigeria's security dynamics and informs strategies for addressing them in the present and future.

Policy Analysis: The policy analysis conducted in this study involved a comprehensive examination of policy documents and governmental reports to assess the efficacy of policy responses to Nigeria's complex security challenges. This entailed scrutinizing policy objectives, strategies, and implementation mechanisms, as well as evaluating their impacts on governance, security, and development outcomes. By conducting comparative analyses across different administrations, the study aimed to discern patterns, shifts, and continuities in security paradigms and policy approaches over time. Furthermore, the policy analysis shed light on underlying policy dilemmas and governance challenges, offering valuable insights into the effectiveness of past policies and informing recommendations for future policy interventions aimed at promoting peace, stability, and sustainable development in Nigeria.

Ethical Considerations: Ethical considerations were central throughout the research process, particularly concerning data collection and dissemination. Upholding principles of respect, confidentiality, and informed consent was paramount in interviews and data handling to ensure the protection of participants' rights and minimize potential harm. Additionally, the researcher maintained critical reflexivity, acknowledging their own positionality, biases, and potential impacts on the research process and outcomes. This transparency and self-awareness enhanced the credibility and integrity of the study, fostering trustworthiness in the research findings and contributing to ethical standards in academic inquiry.

Analytical Methodologies: The analytical methodologies employed in this study encompassed both qualitative and quantitative approaches to comprehensively explore Nigeria's security dynamics since the Babangida administration. Qualitative methods such as content analysis of policy documents, governmental reports, and academic literature allowed for in-depth exploration of contextual factors, policy responses, and diverse perspectives related to internal and external security challenges. Additionally, qualitative techniques such as thematic analysis of interview data with security experts and stakeholders provided rich insights into contemporary security issues and governance practices in Nigeria. Complementing these qualitative approaches, quantitative methods such as statistical analysis of relevant data, including socio-economic indicators and conflict-related statistics, offered empirical evidence and quantitative insights into the scale, scope, and trends of security challenges over time. By employing a combination of qualitative and quantitative analytical methodologies, this study aimed to provide a comprehensive and robust analysis of Nigeria's security dynamics, enriching scholarly understanding and informing policy discourse in the field of security studies.

Furthermore, the analytical methodologies utilized in this study facilitated the identification of patterns, trends, and causal relationships within Nigeria's security landscape. By systematically analyzing data from diverse sources, including historical records, policy documents, and interview transcripts, the study sought to uncover underlying factors driving security challenges and governance responses. Thematic analysis of qualitative data enabled the identification of key themes, issues, and perspectives, offering a nuanced understanding of the complexities surrounding security governance in Nigeria. Concurrently, quantitative analysis provided

statistical evidence to support and validate qualitative findings, enhancing the robustness and reliability of the study's conclusions. Through rigorous analytical methodologies, this study aimed to contribute valuable insights into Nigeria's security dynamics, informing evidence-based policy recommendations and advancing scholarly discourse on security governance in complex sociopolitical contexts.

Literature Review

The literature on Nigeria's security landscape since Babangida's administration provides valuable insights into the multifaceted dynamics and impacts of internal and external security challenges. Scholars have extensively examined the historical, political, and socio-economic factors shaping Nigeria's security environment, offering diverse perspectives on the root causes, manifestations, and policy responses to security threats.

Adibe (2017) underscores the role of ethnic militias in posing a significant threat to democracy and stability in post-transition Nigeria. Through a historical analysis, Adibe elucidates how ethnic tensions, exacerbated by socio-economic disparities and political marginalization, have fueled the emergence of militias such as the O'odua People's Congress (OPC) and the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND). By exploring the complex interplay between ethnicity, identity politics, and state fragility, Adibe highlights the challenges of addressing internal security threats within a democratic framework.

Ibrahim (2019) focuses on the Boko Haram insurgency and its implications for regional security in Nigeria. Ibrahim's analysis traces the origins and evolution of Boko Haram from a localized religious movement to a transnational terrorist organization, with far-reaching implications for Nigeria's internal stability and regional security dynamics. Through a comparative examination of counterinsurgency strategies and regional cooperation initiatives, Ibrahim evaluates the efficacy of policy responses in mitigating the Boko Haram threat and fostering sustainable peace in the Lake Chad Basin. Ojo (2020) delves into Nigeria's external security challenges, with a specific focus on the Lake Chad Basin crisis. Ojo's study analyzes the geopolitical dynamics, resource conflicts, and humanitarian implications of the crisis, which has been exacerbated by the activities of Boko Haram and other militant groups. Drawing upon geopolitical theories and regional security frameworks, Ojo elucidates the complexities of addressing transnational security threats and promoting cooperative security arrangements among Lake Chad Basin countries.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) provides a comprehensive threat assessment of transnational organized crime in West Africa, shedding light on the nexus between security, governance, and illicit activities. The UNODC report highlights the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, human trafficking, and drug smuggling as key security challenges facing Nigeria and the broader West African region. By emphasizing the interconnectedness of internal and external security dynamics, the report underscores the importance of holistic approaches to addressing transnational security threats. Collectively, these studies contribute to a nuanced understanding of Nigeria's security landscape, elucidating the interplay between internal and external security factors and their implications for governance, development, and regional stability. By integrating historical analysis, policy evaluation, and empirical research, scholars have provided valuable insights into the complexities of addressing security challenges in Nigeria and underscored the imperative of multidimensional approaches to fostering sustainable peace and security in the region.

Theoretical Framework

For the analysis of Nigeria's security dynamics since Babangida's administration, the most suitable theoretical framework is Securitization Theory. Developed by the Copenhagen School of security studies, securitization theory offers a robust analytical lens through which to understand how certain issues are constructed as security threats and legitimized for extraordinary measures. This theory is particularly relevant in the Nigerian context, where security challenges such as ethnoreligious conflicts, insurgencies, and transnational crimes are often framed as existential threats to the state, justifying securitization measures such as military interventions and emergency powers.

Analysis of Securitization Theory in the Nigerian Context

Framing of Security Threats: Securitization theory helps elucidate how various actors, including political elites, security institutions, and media, frame security threats in Nigeria. For example, ethno-religious conflicts in the Middle Belt region or the Boko Haram insurgency in the Northeast are often portrayed as threats to national unity, territorial integrity, and societal cohesion. Through discursive practices, these issues are securitized, thereby legitimizing state responses that prioritize security over other concerns such as human rights or development:

State Responses. The application of securitization theory allows for an examination of state responses to perceived security threats in Nigeria. The Babangida administration and subsequent governments have employed securitization measures such as the deployment of military forces, imposition of curfews, and enactment of emergency laws to address internal security challenges. By analyzing the securitization process, scholars can assess the implications of these responses on governance, civil liberties, and conflict resolution in Nigeria.

Impact on Governance and Society. Securitization theory sheds light on how the securitization of certain issues shapes governance practices and societal dynamics in Nigeria. The prioritization of security concerns over other policy objectives may lead to the erosion of democratic norms, restriction of civil liberties, and militarization of governance structures. Moreover, securitization narratives may exacerbate social divisions, stigmatize marginalized communities, and perpetuate cycles of violence. Through a securitization lens, scholars can critically evaluate the trade-offs between security imperatives and democratic principles in Nigeria's governance architecture.

Counter-Securitization and Alternative Narratives. Lastly, securitization theory also allows for an analysis of counter-securitization efforts and alternative narratives that challenge dominant security discourses in Nigeria. Civil society organizations, human rights activists, and peacebuilding initiatives often seek to de-securitize certain issues, reframe security debates, and promote inclusive approaches to conflict resolution. By examining counter-securitization dynamics, scholars can assess the potential for transformative change in Nigeria's security governance and contribute to more inclusive and sustainable peacebuilding strategies.

Overall, securitization theory provides a valuable theoretical framework for analyzing Nigeria's security dynamics since Babangida's administration. By examining the construction of security threats, state responses, governance implications, and counter-securitization efforts, scholars can develop a nuanced understanding of the complex interplay between security discourses, practices, and societal dynamics in Nigeria. Moreover, securitization theory informs policy

recommendations and advocacy strategies aimed at promoting human security, democratic governance, and conflict transformation in Nigeria and beyond.

Findings and Discussions

The examination of Nigeria's security dynamics since Babangida administration reveals a complex interplay between internal and external security challenges, framed within the theoretical lens of Securitization Theory. The construction of security threats, such as ethno-religious conflicts, insurgencies, and transnational crimes, has been central to the securitization process, legitimizing state responses that prioritize security imperatives over other policy objectives. This securitization of issues has led to the deployment of militarized approaches, including military interventions, emergency laws, and curfews, which have implications for governance, civil liberties, and conflict resolution in Nigeria. Moreover, the securitization of certain issues has had profound impacts on governance practices and societal dynamics in Nigeria. The prioritization of security concerns has sometimes led to the erosion of democratic norms, restriction of civil liberties, and militarization of governance structures. Furthermore, securitization narratives have exacerbated social divisions, stigmatized marginalized communities, and perpetuated cycles of violence. However, amidst these challenges, there have been instances of counter-securitization efforts and alternative narratives that seek to de-securitize certain issues, reframe security debates, and promote inclusive approaches to conflict resolution.

The analysis of Nigeria's security dynamics through the lens of Securitization Theory underscores the complexities of addressing internal and external security challenges in the country. While securitization processes have shaped state responses, governance practices, and societal dynamics, there is also potential for transformative change through counter-securitization efforts and alternative narratives. By critically engaging with security discourses, practices, and power dynamics, policymakers, scholars, and civil society actors can contribute to more inclusive and sustainable approaches to peacebuilding and conflict resolution in Nigeria.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the analysis of Nigeria's security dynamics since Babangida's administration underscores the multifaceted nature of internal and external security challenges facing the nation. Through the theoretical lens of Securitization Theory, it becomes evident that the construction of security threats has played a pivotal role in shaping state responses and governance practices. The securitization of issues such as ethno-religious conflicts and insurgencies has often led to the prioritization of security imperatives over other policy objectives, resulting in militarized approaches and restrictions on civil liberties. Moreover, the securitization process has had far-reaching implications for governance effectiveness, societal cohesion, and conflict resolution in Nigeria. The erosion of democratic norms, exacerbation of social divisions, and perpetuation of cycles of violence highlight the negative consequences of securitization narratives on governance and human security. However, amidst these challenges, there are opportunities for transformative change through counter-securitization efforts and alternative narratives that seek to promote inclusive approaches to peacebuilding and conflict resolution.

Moving forward, policymakers, scholars, and civil society actors must critically engage with security discourses, practices, and power dynamics to foster more inclusive and sustainable approaches to peace and security in Nigeria. By prioritizing human security, democratic governance, and conflict transformation, stakeholders can work towards addressing root causes of insecurity, promoting social cohesion, and building resilient communities capable of withstanding

internal and external threats. Ultimately, the path towards lasting peace and stability in Nigeria requires a holistic understanding of security that transcends narrow securitization narratives and embraces inclusive and participatory approaches to governance and peacebuilding.

Recommendations

1. Based on the insights derived from the analysis, the study provides the following recommendations for policymakers and stakeholders involved in addressing the dynamics and impacts of external and internal security on Nigeria since the Babangida administration:

- a. **Promoting Inclusive Dialogue and Conflict Resolution.** Nigeria should prioritize inclusive dialogue and conflict resolution mechanisms to address underlying grievances and promote social cohesion. This includes engaging with marginalized communities, civil society organizations, and religious leaders to address root causes of conflict and build consensus on shared values and aspirations. By fostering dialogue and reconciliation processes, Nigeria can mitigate the drivers of insecurity and promote sustainable peace at the grassroots level.
- b. **Strengthening Governance Institutions.** Efforts to enhance governance effectiveness, transparency, and accountability are crucial for addressing security challenges in Nigeria. This entails strengthening rule of law institutions, promoting good governance practices, and combating corruption within security agencies. By improving governance structures and promoting accountability, Nigeria can enhance state legitimacy, build public trust, and effectively respond to security threats.
- c. **Investing in Socio-Economic Development.** Addressing socio-economic inequalities and promoting inclusive development are essential for reducing vulnerability to insecurity in Nigeria. The government should prioritize investments in education, healthcare, infrastructure, and job creation to address socio-economic disparities and empower marginalized populations. By addressing root causes of poverty and inequality, Nigeria can create opportunities for social mobility, reduce grievances, and foster resilience against radicalization and violent extremism.
- d. **Enhancing Regional Cooperation.** Given the transnational nature of security threats in West Africa, Nigeria should prioritize regional cooperation and coordination mechanisms to address cross-border crimes, terrorism, and insurgency. This includes strengthening partnerships with neighbouring countries, regional organizations, and international stakeholders to enhance information sharing, border security, and joint security operations. By fostering regional cooperation, Nigeria can effectively combat transnational security threats and promote stability in the wider West African region.
- e. **Promoting Human Rights and Civil Liberties.** Upholding human rights, civil liberties, and the rule of law is essential for building a resilient and inclusive security architecture in Nigeria. The government should respect constitutional safeguards, protect freedom of expression and assembly, and ensure accountability for human rights abuses committed by security forces. By promoting respect for human rights and civil liberties, Nigeria can enhance state legitimacy, build public trust, and reduce tensions between security forces and civilian populations.
- f. **Investing in Community Policing and Conflict Prevention.** Nigeria should prioritize community policing initiatives and conflict prevention strategies to build trust between security forces and local communities. This includes training security personnel in community engagement, conflict resolution, and human rights protection, as well as promoting community-based early warning systems and mediation mechanisms. By empowering communities to participate in their own security governance, Nigeria can

enhance local resilience, prevent conflicts, and build sustainable peace from the ground up. 2. In implementing these recommendations, Nigeria can strengthen its capacity to address internal and external security challenges, promote inclusive governance, and build resilient communities capable of withstanding threats to peace and stability. By adopting a holistic and multi-dimensional approach to security governance, Nigeria can foster sustainable peace, promote human security, and realize its full potential as a prosperous and resilient nation.

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