

FROM SECURITY OPERATIONS TO HUMAN SECURITY: REIMAGINING NIGERIA'S NATIONAL SECURITY ARCHITECTURE FOR SUSTAINABLE PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT

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Jo Odama¹, FC Okpo¹, Mukhtar Imam¹

¹National Institute for Security Studies, Abuja-Nigeria, Nigeria

Correspondence: Jo Odama, mukhtarimam01@gmail.com

Abstract

The changing nature of twenty-first-century security threats has exposed the limitations of traditional state-centric approaches that prioritize military operations and territorial defense while overlooking the socioeconomic and governance factors that drive insecurity. Nigeria exemplifies this challenge, as substantial investments in defense and internal security have achieved only limited success in addressing persistent threats such as terrorism, banditry, kidnapping, farmer-herder conflicts, separatist agitations, cybercrime, organized crime, poverty, unemployment, and climate-related displacement. These interconnected challenges continue to undermine national stability, economic growth, democratic governance, and citizens' well-being, highlighting the need to shift from an operational security model to a human security approach. This study examines the transition from conventional security operations to a human security framework as a strategy for achieving sustainable peace and development in Nigeria. Guided by Human Security Theory, Securitization Theory, Human Development Theory, and Systems Theory, the study adopts a qualitative methodology based on documentary analysis and comparative institutional review of government policies, scholarly literature, and reports from international organizations. It argues that lasting national security requires addressing the structural causes of insecurity, including poverty, inequality, weak governance, corruption, environmental degradation, food insecurity, unemployment, and social exclusion, rather than relying solely on military responses. The findings reveal that Nigeria's security architecture remains highly centralized, reactive, and militarized, with weak institutional coordination, inadequate intelligence integration, limited community participation, and insufficient accountability undermining its effectiveness. To address these shortcomings, the study proposes an Integrated Human Security Architecture for Nigeria (IHSA-N) that integrates defense, intelligence, policing, economic development, environmental sustainability, public health, digital

governance, social protection, and community resilience into a unified security framework. The model emphasizes preventive security, inclusive governance, inter-agency collaboration, and citizen participation as essential pillars of national stability. The study concludes that adopting a human security approach would strengthen state legitimacy, promote sustainable peace and economic development, and support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the African Union's Agenda 2063 through comprehensive institutional reforms and people-centered security policies.

Keywords: Human Security, National Security, Security Architecture, Sustainable Peace, Sustainable Development, Nigeria, Security Governance, Human Development, Conflict Prevention, Public Policy

1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of national security has undergone significant transformation over the past several decades. Traditionally, national security was viewed primarily through a realist lens that emphasized the protection of state sovereignty, territorial integrity, and political independence against external aggression. Governments therefore concentrated on developing military capabilities, intelligence systems, and law enforcement institutions to defend the state against conventional threats. This state-centric conception of security dominated international relations throughout much of the twentieth century and shaped the security policies of many post-colonial African states, including Nigeria (Buzan, Wæver, & de Wilde, 1998; Walt, 1991).

However, the changing global security environment has challenged the adequacy of this narrow understanding of security. Contemporary threats increasingly originate from non-state actors, transnational criminal networks, environmental degradation, pandemics, cybercrime, economic instability, violent extremism, and governance failures rather than traditional interstate warfare (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 1994; Newman, 2016). These multidimensional threats transcend national borders and affect not only the security of states but also the everyday safety, dignity, and livelihoods of individuals and communities.

The emergence of the Human Security paradigm represented a significant departure from conventional security thinking. Introduced prominently in the 1994 United Nations Development Programme Human Development Report, human security broadened the referent object of security from the state to the individual. It argued that genuine security encompasses protection from chronic threats such as hunger, disease, repression, poverty, environmental degradation, and violent conflict while simultaneously empowering people to live productive and dignified lives (UNDP, 1994). This perspective recognizes that sustainable peace depends not merely on military strength but also on equitable development, social justice, good governance, and resilient institutions.

For Nigeria, this paradigm shift is particularly relevant. As Africa's largest economy by gross domestic product and one of its most populous nations, Nigeria occupies a strategic position in regional peace and security. Yet the country continues to face a complex array of interconnected security challenges that threaten national stability and development. The Boko Haram insurgency and Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) activities in the northeast, widespread banditry in the northwest, farmer-herder conflicts in the Middle Belt, separatist agitations in the southeast, piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, kidnapping for ransom across multiple regions, cybercrime, organized criminality, communal violence, and urban insecurity collectively illustrate the multidimensional character of Nigeria's security crisis (International Crisis Group, 2024; Global Terrorism Index, 2025).

Successive Nigerian administrations have responded primarily through military deployments, emergency

operations, enhanced defense spending, and the establishment of specialized security agencies. Significant investments have been directed toward expanding military capabilities, improving intelligence gathering, and strengthening internal security operations. Nevertheless, many security threats have persisted, evolved, or expanded geographically despite these efforts. This persistent insecurity raises important questions regarding the effectiveness of an operationally focused security architecture that prioritizes kinetic responses while often giving insufficient attention to the structural drivers of violence and instability.

Empirical evidence increasingly suggests that poverty, unemployment, youth marginalization, weak governance, corruption, environmental degradation, food insecurity, poor service delivery, social exclusion, and limited access to justice significantly contribute to insecurity in Nigeria (World Bank, 2023; United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs [UNOCHA], 2024). Consequently, addressing these root causes requires an integrated approach that extends beyond military interventions to encompass governance reform, socioeconomic development, institutional resilience, environmental sustainability, and community empowerment.

The concept of sustainable peace similarly reflects this broader understanding of security. Sustainable peace extends beyond the mere absence of armed conflict and encompasses the establishment of inclusive political institutions, equitable economic opportunities, effective public service delivery, respect for human rights, and mechanisms for peaceful conflict resolution (United Nations, 2016). Sustainable development and sustainable peace therefore reinforce one another, as development reduces vulnerability to conflict while peace creates conditions necessary for economic and social progress.

This article argues that Nigeria's security architecture should transition from a predominantly operational and state-centric orientation toward a comprehensive human security framework that integrates military effectiveness with social protection, institutional accountability, economic opportunity, environmental resilience, and citizen participation. Such an approach recognizes that national security and human development are complementary rather than competing objectives. Accordingly, the article develops an Integrated Human Security Architecture for Nigeria (IHSA-N) that seeks to harmonize traditional security institutions with broader governance and development systems capable of preventing conflict and sustaining peace.

2. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Security has historically constituted one of the primary responsibilities of the modern state. Classical political theorists, including Thomas Hobbes, argued that the preservation of life and property forms the fundamental basis upon which governments derive legitimacy. In Hobbes's conception, citizens surrender certain freedoms to the sovereign in exchange for protection against violence and disorder. Consequently, security became intrinsically linked to state authority, military capability, and territorial sovereignty (Hobbes, 1651/1996).

Following the end of the Second World War and throughout the Cold War period, national security policies across much of the world were predominantly shaped by realist assumptions emphasizing interstate competition, military deterrence, and geopolitical rivalry (Morgenthau, 1948). Newly independent African states similarly inherited security institutions designed primarily to protect state authority rather than promote citizen welfare. Nigeria's post-independence security architecture evolved within this broader context, with significant emphasis placed on the armed forces, police, intelligence agencies, and centralized command structures.

Nigeria's contemporary security architecture comprises several institutions, including the Armed Forces of Nigeria, the Nigeria Police Force, the Department of State Services, the National Intelligence Agency, the

Defence Intelligence Agency, the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, the Office of the National Security Adviser, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, the Nigeria Immigration Service, the Nigeria Customs Service, and other specialized agencies. Together, these institutions constitute the operational framework through which the Nigerian state seeks to maintain law and order, defend territorial integrity, and respond to security threats.

Despite this extensive institutional architecture, Nigeria has experienced an increasingly complex security landscape over the past two decades. The Boko Haram insurgency, which emerged in the early 2000s and intensified after 2009, has resulted in thousands of deaths, widespread displacement, destruction of infrastructure, and significant humanitarian crises across northeastern Nigeria. Although sustained military operations have weakened the insurgency in certain areas, extremist violence remains a persistent concern due to adaptive insurgent tactics, cross-border dynamics, and socioeconomic vulnerabilities.

Simultaneously, northwestern Nigeria has witnessed the rapid escalation of armed banditry involving mass abductions, attacks on rural communities, cattle rustling, and extortion. Farmer-herder conflicts, driven by competition over land, desertification, population growth, and weak resource governance, have intensified across the Middle Belt, contributing to substantial human casualties and displacement. Separatist movements in southeastern Nigeria, communal conflicts, cult-related violence, and urban criminality further complicate the national security environment.

Beyond physical violence, Nigeria also confronts numerous non-traditional security threats. Rapid population growth, climate change, food insecurity, unemployment, inflation, cybercrime, infectious diseases, environmental degradation, irregular migration, and digital misinformation increasingly undermine national resilience. The COVID-19 pandemic further demonstrated that public health emergencies can generate profound economic, political, and security consequences, reinforcing arguments that national security must encompass more than military preparedness alone.

These evolving threats coincide with persistent governance challenges. Public perceptions of corruption, limited trust in institutions, inadequate public service delivery, judicial delays, and uneven socioeconomic development continue to weaken state legitimacy in many communities. Research consistently demonstrates that where citizens perceive government institutions as ineffective or exclusionary, non-state actors often exploit governance vacuums to recruit supporters, establish parallel authority structures, or engage in organized criminal activities.

The international community has increasingly recognized the interconnectedness between development and security. The adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015 explicitly links peace, justice, strong institutions, poverty reduction, quality education, health, gender equality, climate action, and inclusive governance as mutually reinforcing objectives. Sustainable Development Goal 16, in particular, emphasizes peaceful and inclusive societies, access to justice, and effective, accountable institutions as essential foundations for sustainable development (United Nations, 2015).

Similarly, the African Union's Agenda 2063 identifies peace, security, democratic governance, and inclusive socioeconomic transformation as central pillars of Africa's long-term development strategy. Nigeria's own national development frameworks—including the National Development Plan (2021–2025) and the National Security Strategy—also acknowledge the importance of integrating security with governance, economic growth, and social inclusion. However, translating these policy aspirations into coherent institutional practice remains an ongoing challenge.

Recent scholarship increasingly advocates a transition toward integrated security governance that combines military readiness with investments in education, healthcare, social protection, employment

generation, environmental management, digital innovation, community resilience, and institutional accountability. Such an approach recognizes that preventing insecurity is often more sustainable and cost-effective than responding to crises after they emerge.

Against this backdrop, the present study contends that Nigeria's security architecture requires comprehensive reform to align with contemporary realities. Rather than viewing security solely as the responsibility of defense and law enforcement institutions, the article argues for a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach in which security is understood as the cumulative outcome of effective governance, inclusive development, resilient institutions, and empowered communities. Reimagining Nigeria's national security architecture through the human security paradigm therefore offers an opportunity to strengthen both state capacity and citizen well-being while advancing sustainable peace and national development.

3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Despite significant investments in defense and internal security over the past two decades, Nigeria continues to experience one of the most complex and persistent security crises in Africa. Successive governments have increased military expenditure, expanded the operational capacity of security agencies, procured sophisticated military equipment, and launched numerous security operations such as *Operation Hadin Kai*, *Operation Safe Haven*, *Operation Whirl Stroke*, *Operation Delta Safe*, and *Operation Forest Sanity*. These interventions have undoubtedly recorded tactical successes against insurgent groups, criminal gangs, and separatist elements. However, the persistence, diffusion, and increasing sophistication of security threats suggest that military-centric interventions alone have not achieved sustainable security outcomes (Global Terrorism Index [GTI], 2025; Stockholm International Peace Research Institute [SIPRI], 2024).

Nigeria's security landscape has evolved beyond conventional military threats into a multidimensional crisis encompassing terrorism, violent extremism, kidnapping for ransom, banditry, communal conflicts, farmer-herder violence, cybercrime, maritime piracy, organized crime, human trafficking, illicit arms proliferation, environmental insecurity, food insecurity, and climate-induced displacement. These threats are increasingly interconnected and mutually reinforcing. For example, poverty and unemployment facilitate recruitment into armed groups, while insecurity simultaneously undermines agricultural production, investment, education, healthcare, and economic growth, thereby perpetuating cycles of deprivation and violence (World Bank, 2023).

The humanitarian consequences are equally profound. Millions of Nigerians have been displaced internally due to conflict, particularly in the North-East, North-West, and parts of the Middle Belt. Thousands of schools have been temporarily closed because of insecurity, while attacks on healthcare facilities have limited access to essential medical services. Agricultural productivity has declined in several conflict-prone regions, contributing to food inflation and threatening national food security. Businesses continue to incur substantial losses arising from insecurity, resulting in reduced domestic investment, capital flight, and slower economic development (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs [UNOCHA], 2024).

A critical limitation of Nigeria's existing national security architecture is its overwhelming emphasis on operational responses after security threats have emerged. Security governance remains largely reactive, focusing on military deployments, law enforcement operations, and emergency interventions rather than preventive strategies addressing the structural causes of insecurity. Consequently, substantial public resources continue to be devoted to managing recurring crises instead of investing in long-term resilience through education, employment generation, healthcare, environmental sustainability, social inclusion, and

institutional strengthening.

Institutionally, Nigeria's security governance is characterized by fragmentation, overlapping mandates, inadequate inter-agency coordination, intelligence-sharing deficiencies, and limited integration between security institutions and development agencies. Although several reforms have sought to improve collaboration among military, intelligence, and law enforcement agencies, coordination challenges continue to undermine operational efficiency and policy coherence. Moreover, centralized decision-making has often constrained local responsiveness to context-specific security challenges, particularly in rural communities where state presence remains weak.

Governance deficits further compound these challenges. Persistent corruption, weak public accountability, limited access to justice, inadequate service delivery, political exclusion, and declining public trust in government institutions reduce the legitimacy of the state and weaken social cohesion. Communities that perceive government institutions as ineffective or unresponsive may become increasingly vulnerable to criminal influence, extremist recruitment, vigilantism, or communal violence. Such conditions reinforce the argument that national security cannot be sustained solely through military superiority but requires effective governance capable of meeting citizens' socioeconomic needs (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012).

Another significant gap lies in the conceptualization of security itself. Nigeria's national security policies have historically prioritized the protection of state institutions, territorial integrity, and regime stability. While these objectives remain indispensable, they insufficiently capture contemporary threats affecting the daily lives of ordinary citizens. Human security literature argues that security should encompass freedom from fear, freedom from want, and freedom to live with dignity (UNDP, 1994). This broader perspective recognizes that poverty, disease, environmental degradation, unemployment, inequality, and political marginalization can pose security risks equal to or greater than conventional military threats.

Although Nigeria's National Security Strategy acknowledges several non-traditional security threats, implementation has largely remained anchored in conventional operational paradigms. Limited integration between national development planning and security governance has prevented the emergence of a coherent, preventive, and people-centered security architecture. Existing research has extensively examined individual security challenges such as terrorism, insurgency, or banditry. However, relatively few studies have systematically explored how Nigeria's overall security architecture can be fundamentally reimagined through the human security paradigm to simultaneously promote sustainable peace, resilient institutions, and inclusive development.

This study therefore addresses this important knowledge gap by examining how Nigeria can transition from an operationally dominated security architecture toward an integrated human security framework capable of preventing conflict, strengthening governance, promoting socioeconomic development, and ensuring long-term national stability. In doing so, the study seeks to contribute both theoretically and practically to contemporary debates on security sector reform, peacebuilding, and sustainable development in Africa.

4. CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

4.1 National Security

National security traditionally refers to the protection of a state's sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence, constitutional order, and national interests against internal and external threats. Early realist scholars such as Morgenthau (1948) and Walt (1991) conceptualized national security primarily in military terms, emphasizing defense capabilities and state survival.

Contemporary scholarship adopts a broader perspective, recognizing that economic instability, pandemics,

environmental degradation, cyber threats, organized crime, and governance failures also threaten national stability (Buzan, Wæver, & de Wilde, 1998). Accordingly, national security in this study is understood as the capacity of the Nigerian state to protect its citizens, institutions, economy, environment, and democratic values while creating conditions for sustainable development and human well-being.

4.2 Human Security

Human security emerged prominently through the United Nations Development Programme's Human Development Report (1994), which shifted the focus of security from states to individuals. It identifies seven interconnected dimensions:

- Economic security
- Food security
- Health security
- Environmental security
- Personal security
- Community security
- Political security

Human security emphasizes both freedom from fear and freedom from want, while later scholarship has also incorporated freedom to live in dignity (Commission on Human Security, 2003). This article adopts this expanded understanding as the normative foundation for reimagining Nigeria's security architecture.

4.3 Security Architecture

Security architecture refers to the institutional, legal, policy, operational, and governance arrangements through which a state organizes the provision of security. It includes security agencies, intelligence systems, legal frameworks, oversight institutions, coordination mechanisms, and partnerships among government, civil society, and international actors. In this study, security architecture extends beyond coercive institutions to include the broader governance ecosystem that contributes to peace and resilience.

4.4 Sustainable Peace

Sustainable peace is more than the absence of armed conflict. It encompasses inclusive governance, social justice, respect for human rights, equitable access to opportunities, effective institutions, and mechanisms for resolving disputes peacefully. It is closely linked to long-term development and societal resilience.

4.5 Sustainable Development

The World Commission on Environment and Development (1987) defines sustainable development as development that meets present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Within the context of this study, sustainable development involves inclusive economic growth, social equity, environmental stewardship, and institutional effectiveness, all of which reinforce human security and national stability.

5. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Understanding Nigeria's evolving security challenges requires a multidisciplinary theoretical perspective that extends beyond conventional military thinking. No single theory adequately explains the complex interactions among governance, socioeconomic development, environmental pressures, institutional capacity, and violent conflict. Consequently, this study adopts four complementary theoretical perspectives: Human Security Theory, Securitization Theory, Human Development Theory, and Systems Theory. Together, these theories provide a comprehensive analytical framework for examining the transition from operational security to a people-centered national security architecture.

5.1 Human Security Theory

Human Security Theory emerged during the post-Cold War period as scholars and policymakers recognized that military superiority alone could no longer guarantee national stability. While traditional security focused on protecting states from external aggression, the end of bipolar geopolitical rivalry revealed a growing range of non-traditional threats affecting individuals directly, including poverty, disease, environmental degradation, forced migration, organized crime, terrorism, and political repression (Newman, 2016).

The publication of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Report (1994) fundamentally transformed security discourse by introducing the concept of human security. The report argued that security should shift "from safeguarding territory to safeguarding people." It emphasized that individuals, rather than states, should become the primary referent object of security.

The report identified seven mutually reinforcing dimensions of human security:

- Economic security
- Food security
- Health security
- Environmental security
- Personal security
- Community security
- Political security

Rather than replacing national security, human security broadens it by recognizing that sustainable national stability depends upon protecting citizens from chronic vulnerabilities as well as sudden crises (UNDP, 1994).

Core Principles

Human Security Theory rests on several interrelated principles:

- People-Centered Security
- Preventive Security
- Integrated Security
- Freedom from Fear
- Freedom from Want
- Freedom to Live in Dignity

The Commission on Human Security (2003) expanded the concept by emphasizing respect for human rights, social inclusion, justice, and equal opportunities.

Relevance to Nigeria

Nigeria illustrates many of the conditions Human Security Theory seeks to explain.

The country's major security challenges are not exclusively military in nature. Insurgency, kidnapping, communal violence, cybercrime, farmer-herder conflicts, piracy, and organized criminality are closely associated with:

- widespread youth unemployment;
- weak institutions;
- poverty;
- educational inequality;

- corruption;
- climate change;
- food insecurity;
- social exclusion;
- environmental degradation.

Military operations may suppress violence temporarily, but unless these underlying structural drivers are addressed, insecurity often re-emerges in different forms. Human Security Theory therefore provides the primary theoretical lens through which this article argues for reimagining Nigeria's security architecture.

5.2 Securitization Theory

Securitization Theory was developed by the Copenhagen School, particularly Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, and Jaap de Wilde (1998). The theory argues that security is socially constructed. Issues become "security problems" not simply because they objectively threaten society but because political actors successfully frame them as existential threats requiring extraordinary policy responses.

Main Assumptions

According to Securitization Theory:

- Security threats are constructed through political discourse.
- Governments determine which issues deserve emergency attention.
- Extraordinary measures become acceptable once issues are successfully securitized.
- Different sectors of society experience security differently.

The Copenhagen School identifies five sectors of security:

- Military
- Political
- Economic
- Environmental
- Societal

This multidimensional framework significantly broadens the traditional understanding of national security.

Application to Nigeria

Nigeria has successfully securitized terrorism and insurgency.

However, several equally significant threats remain comparatively under-securitized despite their enormous implications for national stability, including:

- unemployment;
- food insecurity;
- climate change;
- desertification;
- educational decline;
- healthcare deficiencies;
- corruption;
- cyber insecurity.

These issues often receive considerably fewer resources than military operations despite contributing directly to instability. The theory therefore highlights an imbalance within Nigeria's current security priorities and supports the argument for adopting a broader human security framework.

5.3 Human Development Theory

Human Development Theory was principally advanced by Amartya Sen (1999) and Mahbub ul Haq. Rather than measuring development solely through economic growth, the theory argues that development should expand people's capabilities and freedoms.

Development therefore includes:

- education;
- health;
- income;
- equality;
- opportunity;
- participation.

The Human Development Index (HDI) reflects this broader understanding.

Security Implications

Human Development Theory suggests that insecurity frequently arises where citizens lack opportunities to achieve productive lives.

In Nigeria:

- unemployed youth become vulnerable to recruitment by extremist organizations;
- poor educational outcomes reduce economic mobility;
- inadequate healthcare weakens community resilience;
- regional inequalities fuel grievances;
- Social exclusion undermines trust in government.

Consequently, improving human development indicators becomes a national security strategy rather than merely a social policy objective.

5.4 Systems Theory

Systems Theory views society as an interconnected system in which different institutions continuously interact.

National security therefore depends upon effective relationships among:

- government;
- security agencies;
- judiciary;
- education sector;
- economy;
- healthcare;
- environment;
- civil society;
- private sector;
- international partners.

Weakness in one component eventually affects the entire system.

For example:

Poor education → unemployment → organized crime → insecurity → reduced investment → slower economic growth → increased poverty.

Similarly:

Climate change → reduced agricultural productivity → food insecurity → farmer-herder conflict → displacement → humanitarian crises.

Systems Theory therefore reinforces the argument that security institutions alone cannot achieve sustainable peace without complementary reforms across governance and development sectors.

6. LITERATURE REVIEW**6.1 Evolution of National Security Thinking**

The concept of national security has evolved considerably over the past century. During the realist era, scholars such as Morgenthau (1948) viewed national security primarily in terms of military capability and state survival. States were expected to maximize power to deter external aggression. This perspective dominated international security throughout the Cold War. Following the Cold War, however, scholars increasingly recognized that military superiority did not necessarily guarantee societal stability. Buzan (1991) argued that security should encompass military, political, economic, societal, and environmental dimensions. Similarly, Baldwin (1997) criticized narrow military definitions of security, emphasizing that security involves protecting valued societal interests against diverse threats. These developments laid the foundation for contemporary multidimensional security thinking.

6.2 Human Security in Contemporary Scholarship

Since 1994, Human Security Theory has generated substantial academic attention. King and Murray (2001) argue that human security focuses on protecting the "vital core" of human life. Alkire (2003) similarly emphasizes protecting individuals from pervasive threats while expanding their opportunities. Tadjbakhsh and Chenoy (2007) contend that human security should complement rather than replace national security. Recent scholarship increasingly views human security as essential for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Newman (2016) argues that development failures, governance weaknesses, environmental degradation, and inequality frequently produce greater insecurity than conventional interstate conflicts.

6.3 Security Sector Reform

Security Sector Reform (SSR) has become an important policy agenda across developing democracies. According to the OECD (2007), SSR seeks to improve the effectiveness, accountability, transparency, and democratic oversight of security institutions.

Key principles include:

- professionalism;
- civilian oversight;
- rule of law;
- institutional coordination;
- community engagement;
- respect for human rights.

Nigeria has initiated several SSR reforms since the return to democratic governance in 1999.

However, scholars argue that reforms remain incomplete due to:

- political interference;
- corruption;
- inadequate funding;
- weak accountability;
- fragmented coordination.

6.4 Contemporary Security Challenges in Nigeria

Current literature consistently identifies Nigeria as facing one of Africa's most diverse security environments.

Major threats include:

- Terrorism
- Banditry
- Kidnapping
- Farmer-Herder Conflict
- Maritime Insecurity
- Cybersecurity

6.5 Governance and Security

An extensive body of literature identifies governance quality as a major determinant of national security. Acemoglu and Robinson (2012) argue that inclusive institutions generate stability by creating economic opportunities and political legitimacy. Conversely, extractive institutions perpetuate inequality and conflict. Rotberg (2004) similarly observes that weak states frequently struggle to provide security, justice, and public services, thereby creating governance vacuums exploited by armed groups.

Nigeria exhibits several characteristics associated with governance-related insecurity, including:

- uneven service delivery;
- institutional corruption;
- judicial delays;
- low public trust;
- political patronage;
- administrative inefficiencies.

6.6 Climate Change and Human Security

Recent literature increasingly recognizes climate change as a security issue. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC, 2023) notes that climate change amplifies existing vulnerabilities rather than acting as an isolated cause of conflict. In Nigeria, desertification, flooding, changing rainfall patterns, and declining agricultural productivity have intensified competition over land and water resources. Consequently, environmental sustainability has become an essential component of national security planning.

6.7 Sustainable Development and Peacebuilding

The adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015 formally linked development and security.

SDG 16 emphasizes:

- peaceful societies;

- access to justice;
- accountable institutions;
- effective governance.

UN research increasingly demonstrates that sustainable peace requires:

- inclusive economic growth;
- education;
- healthcare;
- gender equality;
- social protection;
- institutional accountability.

Accordingly, peacebuilding has evolved from post-conflict reconstruction toward conflict prevention and resilience building.

7. RESEARCH GAP

Despite the growing literature on terrorism, insurgency, banditry, and security sector reform in Nigeria, five major gaps remain.

First, most studies analyze individual security threats rather than the architecture of national security itself. Second, existing research remains heavily military-oriented, paying comparatively little attention to preventive human security approaches.

Third, few studies integrate security governance with sustainable development, institutional resilience, and human development into a unified analytical framework. Fourth, comparative lessons from countries that have successfully broadened security governance are underexplored in relation to Nigeria. Finally, there is limited scholarship proposing a comprehensive institutional model capable of integrating defense, governance, development, environmental sustainability, technology, and community participation. This study addresses these gaps by proposing an Integrated Human Security Architecture for Nigeria (IHSA-N) as a holistic framework for achieving sustainable peace and development.

8. METHODOLOGY

8.1 Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative research design, employing documentary research and content analysis to examine Nigeria's national security architecture and assess the applicability of the human security paradigm as a framework for sustainable peace and development. A qualitative approach is appropriate because the study seeks to understand institutional structures, policy processes, governance dynamics, and the interrelationships among security, development, and state capacity rather than to test statistical relationships. Qualitative research enables a nuanced examination of security governance by integrating theoretical insights with policy analysis and empirical evidence from multiple documentary sources (Creswell & Poth, 2018). It also facilitates comparative institutional analysis, allowing lessons from other jurisdictions to be contextualized within Nigeria's political and security environment.

8.2 Research Approach

The study employs an interpretivist analytical approach, recognizing that security is not merely a measurable phenomenon but also a socially and politically constructed concept shaped by institutions, governance practices, historical experiences, and public perceptions. This approach aligns with Human Security Theory and Securitization Theory, both of which emphasize the multidimensional and context-dependent nature of security.

9. NIGERIA'S NATIONAL SECURITY ARCHITECTURE: EVOLUTION AND INSTITUTIONAL ANALYSIS

9.1 Historical Evolution

Nigeria inherited much of its contemporary security architecture from the British colonial administration. Colonial security institutions were primarily designed to maintain law and order, suppress dissent, and protect colonial interests rather than promote citizen welfare. Following independence in 1960, security institutions gradually expanded to safeguard sovereignty and preserve national unity. The Nigerian Civil War (1967–1970) significantly influenced the country's security doctrine by reinforcing centralized command structures and emphasizing territorial integrity. Subsequent military governments consolidated security institutions around regime protection, centralized intelligence gathering, and military dominance in governance. Although democratic rule was restored in 1999, many structural characteristics of this security architecture remain evident today.

9.2 Current Institutional Structure

Nigeria's national security system comprises multiple institutions with distinct but overlapping mandates.

Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA)

The Office of the National Security Adviser serves as the principal coordinating institution for national security policy. It advises the President, coordinates intelligence agencies, and oversees implementation of the National Security Strategy. While ONSA has strengthened strategic coordination, analysts continue to identify challenges relating to inter-agency collaboration, information sharing, and implementation capacity.

Armed Forces of Nigeria

The Armed Forces comprise:

- Nigerian Army
- Nigerian Navy
- Nigerian Air Force
- Their constitutional responsibilities include:
 - defending territorial integrity;
 - supporting civil authorities;
 - participating in peacekeeping;
 - responding to internal security threats.

Over the past decade, the Armed Forces have increasingly performed internal security functions traditionally associated with policing.

Nigeria Police Force

The Nigeria Police Force remains constitutionally responsible for internal security, criminal investigations, public order, and law enforcement.

However, longstanding challenges include:

- personnel shortages;
- inadequate logistics;
- limited forensic capacity;
- insufficient community trust;
- weak investigative infrastructure.

These limitations have contributed to increasing military involvement in domestic security.

Intelligence Community

Nigeria's intelligence architecture consists primarily of:

- Department of State Services (DSS)
- National Intelligence Agency (NIA)
- Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA)

These agencies provide domestic, foreign, and military intelligence.

Despite improvements in intelligence capabilities, scholars frequently identify inadequate intelligence fusion and information sharing among agencies.

Other Security Institutions

Additional institutions include:

- Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps
- Nigeria Immigration Service
- Nigeria Customs Service
- Economic and Financial Crimes Commission
- Independent Corrupt Practices Commission
- National Drug Law Enforcement Agency
- Nigerian Correctional Service
- Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency

Together these organizations contribute to broader national security governance.

10. ASSESSMENT OF NIGERIA'S EXISTING SECURITY ARCHITECTURE

10.1 Institutional Strengths

Despite ongoing security challenges, Nigeria possesses several institutional strengths.

Large Security Workforce

Nigeria maintains one of Africa's largest military establishments and security workforces, providing substantial operational capacity.

Regional Leadership

Nigeria continues to play a leading role in ECOWAS peacekeeping operations and regional counterterrorism initiatives. Its diplomatic influence enhances regional security cooperation.

Growing Intelligence Capacity

Recent investments in surveillance technology, cybersecurity, intelligence analysis, and counterterrorism capabilities have strengthened operational effectiveness.

Legal Framework

Nigeria possesses numerous legal instruments supporting national security, including:

- Terrorism (Prevention) Act
- Cybercrimes Act
- National Security Strategy
- National Defence Policy

- National Counterterrorism Strategy

10.2 Institutional Weaknesses

While institutional capacity has improved, several structural weaknesses continue to constrain effectiveness.

A. Over-Militarization of Internal Security

One of the most significant characteristics of Nigeria's contemporary security architecture is the increasing reliance on military deployments for domestic policing.

Military personnel are routinely deployed to address:

- kidnapping;
- banditry;
- communal conflicts;
- election security;
- public protests;
- pipeline protection.

While necessary under certain circumstances, prolonged military involvement risks:

- reducing police institutional development;
- increasing operational costs;
- creating civil-military tensions;
- weakening democratic accountability.

B. Reactive Rather than Preventive Security

Security interventions frequently occur after violence has escalated.

Preventive investments remain comparatively limited in areas such as:

- education;
- youth employment;
- early warning systems;
- community mediation;
- climate adaptation;
- mental health;
- local governance.

This reactive posture contributes to recurring cycles of violence.

C. Institutional Fragmentation

Numerous agencies possess overlapping mandates.

- Consequences include:
- duplication of effort;
- bureaucratic competition;
- inefficient resource utilization;
- delayed operational responses.

Institutional coordination remains one of the principal reform challenges.

D. Weak Community Participation

Local communities frequently possess valuable intelligence regarding emerging threats.

However, security governance remains largely centralized.

Limited institutional mechanisms exist for:

- citizen engagement;
- participatory security planning;
- community policing;
- local conflict prevention.
- This weakens public trust and reduces intelligence quality.

E. Governance Deficits

Numerous scholars identify governance failures as underlying drivers of insecurity.

These include:

- corruption;
- unemployment;
- poverty;
- poor infrastructure;
- judicial delays;
- limited accountability;
- political exclusion.

Military operations alone cannot address these structural conditions.

11. COMPARATIVE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCES

11.1 Rwanda

Following the 1994 genocide, Rwanda fundamentally restructured its security institutions.

Key reforms included:

- community policing;
- local reconciliation mechanisms;
- anti-corruption institutions;
- decentralization;
- performance-based governance.

Security became integrated with national development planning rather than operating independently.

11.2 Ghana

Ghana emphasizes democratic oversight of security institutions.

Key features include:

- parliamentary oversight;
- civilian control;
- community policing;
- relatively strong institutional accountability.

These reforms have contributed to comparatively stable democratic governance despite regional instability.

11.3 Colombia

Colombia's transition from prolonged armed conflict illustrates the importance of combining military operations with:

- rural development;
- transitional justice;
- economic inclusion;
- institutional reform;
- reintegration of former combatants.

Security improvements accelerated once governance and development interventions complemented military strategies.

11.4 Singapore

Singapore adopts a "Whole-of-Government" security model integrating:

- economic planning;
- cybersecurity;
- education;
- public health;
- technology;
- intelligence;
- civil defence.

Security planning is coordinated across ministries rather than confined to defense institutions.

11.5 Lessons for Nigeria

Several cross-cutting lessons emerge.

- First, security reforms succeed when governance reforms accompany military modernization.
- Second, intelligence integration is more valuable than institutional expansion alone.
- Third, community participation enhances preventive security.
- Fourth, economic inclusion reduces long-term conflict risks.
- Finally, sustainable peace depends upon strong institutions rather than military strength alone.

12. TRANSITIONING FROM SECURITY OPERATIONS TO HUMAN SECURITY

The evidence presented above demonstrates that Nigeria's current security architecture possesses considerable operational capacity but remains constrained by structural, institutional, and governance limitations. While military operations remain indispensable in responding to immediate threats, they cannot independently resolve the socioeconomic and political conditions that generate insecurity. A human security approach does not diminish the importance of defense institutions; rather, it broadens the understanding of security by recognizing that national stability depends equally on effective governance, economic opportunity, social inclusion, environmental sustainability, and resilient communities. Accordingly, the next section develops an Integrated Human Security Architecture for Nigeria (IHSA-N)—a comprehensive framework that aligns security operations with development planning, institutional reform, community participation, and preventive governance to advance sustainable peace and national development.

13. REIMAGINING NIGERIA'S NATIONAL SECURITY ARCHITECTURE: AN INTEGRATED HUMAN SECURITY FRAMEWORK

13.1 Rationale for a New Security Architecture

The analysis presented in the preceding sections demonstrates that Nigeria's contemporary security environment is characterized by multidimensional and mutually reinforcing threats that extend beyond conventional military concerns. Terrorism, insurgency, kidnapping, cybercrime, environmental degradation, food insecurity, organized crime, unemployment, corruption, political exclusion, and climate change collectively threaten not only state institutions but also the daily well-being of citizens. Consequently, an effective national security architecture must evolve from a predominantly operational and reactive model toward a preventive, adaptive, and citizen-centered system. The proposed Integrated Human Security Architecture for Nigeria (IHSA-N) is founded on the premise that sustainable national security depends on the interaction of effective security institutions, accountable governance, inclusive economic development, environmental sustainability, technological innovation, and active citizen participation. Rather than replacing conventional defense structures, the framework integrates them with development institutions to address both the symptoms and root causes of insecurity.

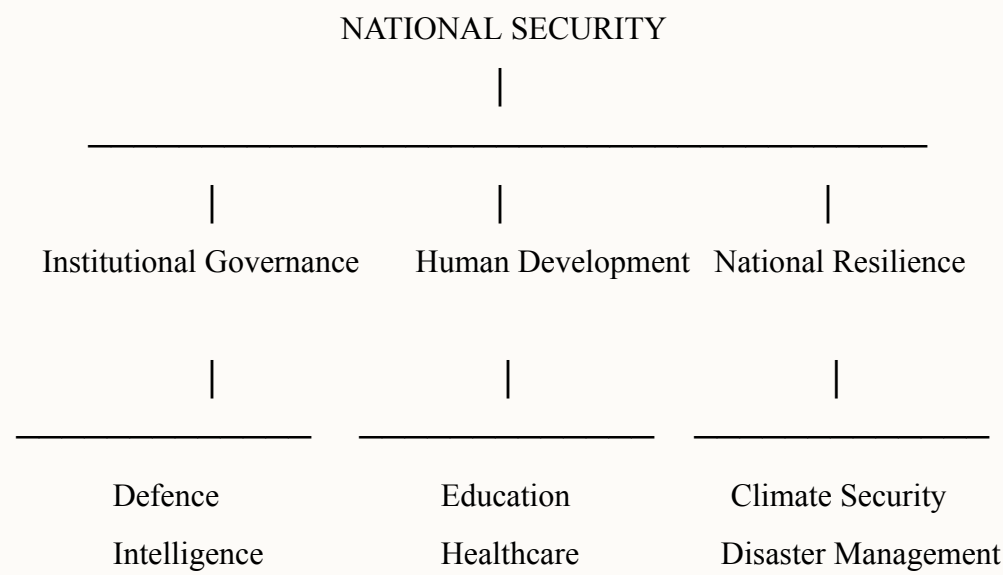
The framework is guided by five principles:

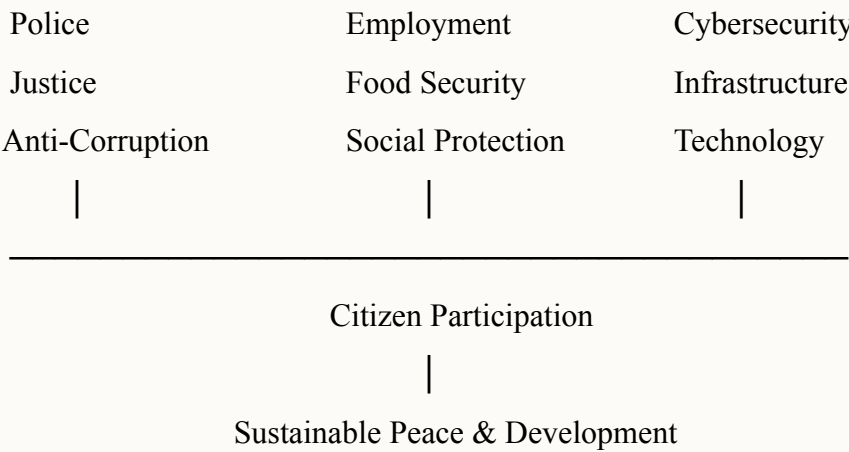
- 1. **People-Centered Security:** Citizens are the primary beneficiaries and participants in national security.
- 2. **Preventive Governance:** Priority is given to early intervention and addressing structural drivers of conflict.
- 3. **Institutional Integration:** Security agencies, development ministries, civil society, and private actors collaborate through coordinated governance mechanisms.
- 4. **Evidence-Based Decision-Making:** Policies are informed by reliable data, intelligence, and risk analysis.
- 5. **Resilience and Sustainability:** Security strategies enhance the capacity of communities and institutions to withstand and recover from shocks.

13.2 Conceptual Model of the Integrated Human Security Architecture for Nigeria (IHSA-N)

The IHSA-N consists of six interdependent pillars, each reinforcing the others to create a comprehensive national security ecosystem.

Figure 1. Proposed Integrated Human Security Architecture for Nigeria (IHSA-N)





The framework recognizes that effective security emerges from the interaction of institutional capacity, human development, environmental resilience, technological innovation, and public participation rather than from military capability alone.

13.3 Pillar One: Institutional Security Governance

Institutional effectiveness remains the foundation of national security. Nigeria possesses a broad range of security institutions, yet coordination challenges, overlapping mandates, bureaucratic fragmentation, and inconsistent policy implementation continue to limit their effectiveness.

The first pillar of the IHSA-N therefore focuses on strengthening institutional governance through five strategic reforms.

Integrated National Security Coordination

The Office of the National Security Adviser should evolve into a strategic coordination hub responsible for integrating defense, intelligence, economic planning, public health, environmental management, digital governance, and emergency response. A permanent National Security Coordination Council should facilitate routine information sharing, joint planning, and inter-agency evaluation.

Integrated Intelligence Fusion

A National Intelligence Fusion Centre should consolidate intelligence from military, police, immigration, customs, financial intelligence, cybersecurity agencies, and state-level institutions. Artificial intelligence and predictive analytics can improve the identification of emerging threats and enhance preventive responses.

Security Sector Professionalization

Continuous professional development, ethics training, human rights education, and performance-based management should be institutionalized across all security agencies. Civilian oversight mechanisms should be strengthened through parliamentary committees, independent complaints commissions, and judicial review.

Judicial Efficiency

An effective justice system is integral to national security. Delays in criminal investigations and prosecutions undermine deterrence and public confidence. Investment in digital case management, forensic laboratories, and specialized courts for terrorism, cybercrime, and organized crime will enhance accountability and the rule of law.

Anti-Corruption Integration

Corruption diverts resources, weakens institutions, and erodes public trust. Security sector procurement should be subject to transparent oversight, competitive tendering, and independent auditing to improve accountability.

13.4 Pillar Two: Human Development as National Security

Human development is central to preventing insecurity. Persistent deprivation creates conditions that facilitate recruitment by extremist groups and organized criminal networks. Consequently, investments in social development should be recognized as strategic security expenditures.

Education

Education reduces vulnerability to radicalization and improves economic mobility. Policies should prioritize universal basic education, technical and vocational training, digital literacy, and civic education. School safety initiatives must be strengthened in conflict-affected regions.

Healthcare

Health security is an essential component of national resilience. Strengthening primary healthcare, disease surveillance, mental health services, and emergency preparedness will reduce vulnerabilities exposed by pandemics and humanitarian crises.

Employment

Youth unemployment remains one of Nigeria's most pressing security challenges. Public investment in agriculture, manufacturing, renewable energy, digital technology, and entrepreneurship can generate productive employment and reduce incentives for criminal participation.

Food Security

Agricultural modernization, irrigation infrastructure, improved storage facilities, climate-smart farming, and rural road development are critical to reducing food insecurity and mitigating farmer-herder conflicts.

Social Protection

Targeted social protection programmes, including conditional cash transfers, unemployment assistance, and livelihood support, can strengthen community resilience during economic shocks and reduce conflict risks.

13.5 Pillar Three: Community Security and Social Cohesion

Security is most sustainable when communities actively participate in maintaining peace.

Community Policing

Community policing should be expanded nationwide through structured partnerships between law enforcement agencies and local communities. Local knowledge significantly improves intelligence gathering and crime prevention.

Traditional Institutions

Traditional rulers, religious leaders, women's organizations, and youth associations possess valuable conflict resolution capacities. Their systematic inclusion in local peacebuilding mechanisms can strengthen trust and reduce tensions.

Conflict Early Warning Systems

Digital reporting platforms, geographic information systems (GIS), and community monitoring networks should support early detection of emerging conflicts. Local governments should establish conflict monitoring units linked to state and federal response mechanisms.

Social Inclusion

Policies should address the marginalization of women, youth, persons with disabilities, and minority communities. Inclusive governance enhances legitimacy and reduces grievances that may escalate into violence.

13.6 Pillar Four: Economic and Environmental Security

Economic resilience and environmental sustainability are increasingly recognized as fundamental components of national security.

Economic Diversification

Reducing dependence on oil revenues through diversification into agriculture, manufacturing, mining, tourism, renewable energy, and digital services will strengthen economic resilience and employment creation.

Climate Security

Climate adaptation should be mainstreamed into national security planning. Priority interventions include:

- afforestation;
- flood control;
- water resource management;
- sustainable grazing systems;
- renewable energy development;
- ecosystem restoration.

Infrastructure Protection

Critical infrastructure—including electricity, telecommunications, transportation networks, and digital infrastructure—requires integrated protection strategies involving physical security, cybersecurity, and emergency preparedness.

Urban Security

Rapid urbanization necessitates investments in affordable housing, transportation, waste management, public lighting, and inclusive urban planning to reduce urban crime and social tensions.

13.7 Pillar Five: Technology and Digital Security

Technological innovation is transforming both security threats and security responses.

Artificial Intelligence

Artificial intelligence can support:

- predictive policing;
- intelligence analysis;
- fraud detection;
- border management;
- cyber defense;
- emergency response.

Appropriate legal and ethical safeguards should accompany AI deployment.

Cybersecurity

Nigeria should strengthen national cybersecurity through:

- protection of critical infrastructure;
- digital identity systems;
- cybersecurity education;
- public-private partnerships;
- cyber incident response teams.

Digital Governance

Integrated digital government platforms improve transparency, reduce corruption, enhance service delivery, and strengthen citizen engagement.

Data Analytics

Real-time security dashboards integrating crime statistics, economic indicators, environmental risks, and public health data will improve evidence-based policymaking.

13.8 Pillar Six: International and Regional Cooperation

Nigeria's security challenges frequently transcend national borders. Effective responses therefore require sustained regional and international collaboration.

Priority areas include:

- intelligence sharing within ECOWAS;
- joint border patrols;
- maritime security cooperation in the Gulf of Guinea;
- counterterrorism partnerships;
- anti-money laundering initiatives;
- migration management;
- climate adaptation programmes.

International cooperation should prioritize capacity building while preserving national ownership of security policies.

14. IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

Successful implementation of the IHSA-N requires a phased approach.

Short-Term (1–3 Years)

Review the National Security Strategy to incorporate human security principles.

- Establish a National Intelligence Fusion Centre.
- Expand community policing pilot programmes.
- Strengthen inter-agency coordination through regular joint planning.
- Develop national early warning systems.

Medium-Term (3–7 Years)

- Reform security sector training institutions.
- Expand vocational education and youth employment programmes.
- Improve judicial efficiency through digitalization.

- Strengthen climate adaptation and disaster risk management.
- Institutionalize performance monitoring across security agencies.

Long-Term (7–15 Years)

- Fully integrate human security indicators into national planning.
- Achieve nationwide digital governance.
- Establish resilient local governance systems.
- Consolidate whole-of-government security planning.
- Position Nigeria as a regional leader in integrated security governance.

15. EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF THE IHSA-N

If effectively implemented, the Integrated Human Security Architecture is expected to produce several mutually reinforcing outcomes:

- Reduced terrorism, banditry, and organized crime.
- Enhanced public trust in government institutions.
- Improved intelligence and inter-agency coordination.
- Increased employment and economic resilience.
- Greater food and environmental security.
- Strengthened democratic governance and accountability.
- Improved social cohesion and conflict prevention.
- Enhanced progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals.
- Increased foreign investment resulting from improved stability.
- Stronger national resilience to future security shocks, including pandemics, cyber threats, and climate-related disasters.

16. DISCUSSION

The proposed IHSA-N demonstrates that national security should no longer be viewed solely through the lens of military operations or law enforcement. Rather, security must be understood as the cumulative outcome of effective governance, inclusive development, institutional accountability, environmental sustainability, technological innovation, and empowered communities. This framework does not advocate reducing investment in defense. Instead, it argues that military effectiveness should be complemented by sustained investments in education, healthcare, employment, social protection, climate resilience, digital transformation, and community participation. Such an integrated approach aligns with the United Nations' human security framework, the Sustainable Development Goals, the African Union's Agenda 2063, and Nigeria's National Development Plan. Ultimately, reimagining Nigeria's national security architecture requires a shift from a "whole-of-security" approach to a "whole-of-government and whole-of-society" model. This transition will enhance the state's ability not only to respond to threats but also to prevent them by addressing their underlying structural causes.

17. CONCLUSION

This study set out to examine how Nigeria's national security architecture can be reimagined from a predominantly operational and state-centric system to a comprehensive human security framework capable of promoting sustainable peace and development. The analysis demonstrates that while Nigeria has invested heavily in strengthening its military and internal security capabilities, persistent insecurity indicates that operational responses alone cannot address the complex realities of contemporary security. The study finds that Nigeria's security challenges are multidimensional, interconnected, and rooted in a combination of governance deficits, socioeconomic inequalities, institutional weaknesses, environmental

pressures, demographic change, and technological transformation. Terrorism, insurgency, banditry, kidnapping, communal violence, cybercrime, food insecurity, climate change, and organized crime are not isolated phenomena but manifestations of broader structural vulnerabilities. Consequently, national security should no longer be conceptualized solely as the protection of territorial integrity and state institutions but also as the protection of individuals, communities, livelihoods, and democratic governance.

The theoretical analysis demonstrates that Human Security Theory provides a more comprehensive framework for understanding contemporary security than traditional realist perspectives. By integrating Human Security Theory with Securitization Theory, Human Development Theory, and Systems Theory, the study develops a multidimensional understanding of security that recognizes the reciprocal relationships among defense, governance, development, environmental sustainability, and citizen well-being. Drawing upon this theoretical foundation, the article proposes the Integrated Human Security Architecture for Nigeria (IHSA-N) as a new conceptual model for national security governance. The framework advances six mutually reinforcing pillars: institutional governance, human development, community security, economic and environmental security, technology and digital security, and international cooperation. Unlike conventional security models that focus primarily on responding to threats after they emerge, the IHSA-N emphasizes prevention, resilience, institutional integration, and citizen participation.

The comparative analysis demonstrates that countries achieving sustainable improvements in national security increasingly combine military modernization with investments in education, healthcare, employment, justice, digital innovation, environmental management, and accountable governance. Nigeria can adapt these lessons while accounting for its unique constitutional structure, demographic diversity, and regional security dynamics. The study therefore concludes that sustainable peace cannot be achieved through military superiority alone. Lasting security requires resilient institutions, inclusive governance, equitable economic opportunities, environmental sustainability, respect for human rights, and active citizen participation. National security and human development should be understood as complementary rather than competing objectives. Ultimately, reimagining Nigeria's national security architecture requires a transformation from a reactive, operational model toward a preventive, integrated, and people-centered governance system capable of simultaneously protecting the state, empowering citizens, and advancing sustainable national development.

18. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this study demonstrate that achieving sustainable peace in Nigeria requires a paradigm shift from a predominantly operational security model to a comprehensive human security approach. While military operations remain indispensable in responding to immediate threats, they must be complemented by structural reforms that address the socioeconomic, political, institutional, and environmental drivers of insecurity. Accordingly, the following policy recommendations are proposed.

1. Develop a National Human Security Strategy

Nigeria should complement its existing National Security Strategy with a **National Human Security Strategy** that formally integrates security policy with national development planning. The strategy should define measurable human security indicators, establish institutional responsibilities, and provide a framework for monitoring progress across federal, state, and local governments.

2. Adopt a Whole-of-Government Security Governance Model

Security governance should be institutionalized as a shared responsibility across ministries, departments, and agencies rather than being concentrated within defense and law enforcement institutions. Ministries

responsible for education, health, agriculture, environment, youth development, women's affairs, digital economy, finance, justice, and humanitarian affairs should participate in national security planning through a strengthened inter-ministerial coordination mechanism led by the Office of the National Security Adviser.

3. Strengthen Preventive Security

Nigeria should prioritize preventive security by investing in early warning systems, conflict prevention, mediation, and peace education. Community-based monitoring networks, supported by digital technologies and geospatial analysis, should be established to detect emerging risks before they escalate into violent conflict.

4. Reform the Nigeria Police Force

The long-term sustainability of Nigeria's security architecture depends on developing a professional, adequately resourced, and community-oriented police service. Key reforms should include:

- recruitment based on merit and diversity;
- continuous professional training;
- modernization of forensic laboratories;
- adoption of digital policing technologies;
- expansion of community policing initiatives;
- improved welfare and remuneration;
- strengthened internal accountability mechanisms.

A capable police service would reduce the need for prolonged military involvement in internal security operations.

5. Strengthen Intelligence Integration

A National Intelligence Fusion Centre should be established to facilitate real-time information sharing among the Department of State Services, National Intelligence Agency, Defence Intelligence Agency, Nigeria Police Force, Nigeria Immigration Service, Nigeria Customs Service, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, and relevant state institutions. Integrated intelligence analysis supported by artificial intelligence and predictive analytics would enhance threat anticipation and coordinated responses.

6. Promote Inclusive Economic Development

Economic insecurity remains a significant driver of instability. Government should expand investments in:

- agriculture and agro-processing;
- manufacturing;
- renewable energy;
- digital innovation;
- infrastructure;
- technical and vocational education;
- small and medium-sized enterprises;
- youth entrepreneurship.

These investments would create employment opportunities, reduce poverty, and weaken the recruitment base for criminal and extremist organizations.

7. Mainstream Climate Security

Climate change should be formally recognized as a national security issue. Security planning should incorporate:

- climate adaptation;
- drought mitigation;
- flood management;
- afforestation;
- sustainable grazing systems;
- renewable energy development;
- integrated water resource management.

These interventions would reduce resource-based conflicts while enhancing environmental resilience.

8. Strengthen Local Governance

State and local governments should assume greater responsibility for community resilience, conflict prevention, and local development. Decentralized governance, supported by adequate fiscal transfers and institutional capacity building, would enable more responsive security interventions tailored to local contexts.

9. Institutionalize Community Participation

Security governance should become more participatory through structured engagement with:

- traditional rulers;
- religious leaders;
- civil society organizations;
- youth associations;
- women's organizations;
- professional associations;
- the private sector.

Community participation enhances trust, improves intelligence gathering, and strengthens conflict prevention.

10. Invest in Technology

Digital transformation should become a strategic component of national security through investments in:

- artificial intelligence;
- cybersecurity;
- digital identity management;
- unmanned aerial systems;
- geospatial intelligence;
- national crime databases;
- integrated emergency communication systems.

Technological modernization would significantly improve operational efficiency and evidence-based policymaking.

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