

# THE IMPACT OF TERRORISM ON NIGERIA AND THE SEARCH FOR A SOLUTION

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## Abstract

This study examines the impact of terrorism in Nigeria and the search for sustainable solutions, drawing insights from the Failed State Theory to explain the state's declining capacity to provide security and stability. The theory posits that when a state loses its monopoly over the legitimate use of force, fails to deliver public services, and cannot maintain order, it risks sliding toward failure. Nigeria's persistent terrorist activities, particularly from Boko Haram, ISWAP, and armed bandit groups, illustrate this theoretical condition, as widespread insecurity, displacement, and economic disruption have undermined the state's authority and legitimacy. The study uses a secondary data collection method, drawing on existing literature, government reports, journal articles, and data from international security organisations, to analyse the socio-economic and political impacts of terrorism. Findings reveal that terrorism in Nigeria has led to massive loss of lives, destruction of infrastructure, forced displacement of millions, and a weakened national economy. Without comprehensive governance reforms and people-centred counterterrorism strategies, Nigeria risks further erosion of state authority and national cohesion. The study also highlights how corruption, unemployment, and poor governance have exacerbated insecurity and fostered conditions conducive to extremism. Based on the analysis, the paper recommends strengthening institutional capacity, enhancing intelligence coordination, addressing the root causes of terrorism through poverty reduction and education, and promoting regional cooperation under frameworks such as the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF).

**Keywords:** Terrorism, Failed State, Governance, Nigeria, Security, Counterterrorism,

## Introduction

A surge in terrorist activities has signalled a sad trajectory in the quest for national development in Nigeria. As Africa's most populous country and largest economy, Nigeria has continued to experience relentless terrorist attacks on its population and infrastructure. These acts are often used to create anxiety and aggression in order to influence the behaviour of citizens or the action of the government. Terrorism can include a range of activities such as hijacking, car-bombing, hostage taking, kidnapping, assassination, suicide bombing, mass shooting and cyberattack. A group or a disgruntled individual targeting civilian populations or government installations can carry it out. Indeed, the basic function of any government is to ensure the

security of its citizens. At the same time, some attacks lead to a show of solidarity among citizens; repeated terrorist attacks may lead citizens to question their leadership. This lack of faith, in turn, can convince citizens to favour more extreme voices that promise law and order, or, if they see no hope in government, to turn to non-governmental actors such as gangs or militias for security (Corbin, 2017).

Terrorism represents a significant threat to Nigeria's national stability, disrupting democratic consolidation, security, and socio-economic growth. Since the early 2000s, the nation has faced an increasingly complex landscape of violent extremism driven by the Boko Haram insurgency in the northeast, which has expanded to include banditry, conflicts between farmers and pastoralists, and networks involved in kidnapping for ransom. These groups exploit enduring structural weaknesses such as poverty, youth unemployment, porous borders, and inadequate institutional capacity, evolving terrorism from a regional insurgency into a nationwide crisis. The consequences are severe; thousands have died, communities have been uprooted, agricultural systems have been devastated, and public trust in the government has diminished. Nigeria's economy is adversely affected by declining foreign investment, rising security expenditures, disrupted supply chains, and an escalating humanitarian crisis.

From an analytical perspective, ongoing terrorist activities highlight deficiencies in Nigeria's security framework, such as the lack of effective intelligence sharing, outdated counterterrorism strategies, and corruption within governmental bodies. It also exposes governance issues that render communities susceptible to recruitment by extremists. The psychological impacts, including feelings of fear, trauma, and social division, have further eroded trust between the populace and the government, weakening societal unity (Onuoha, 2012). Additionally, terrorism carries significant political ramifications, as its rise frequently becomes a means for political rivalry and undermines the legitimacy of democratic processes.

Despite these difficulties, Nigeria's quest for solutions has led to a combination of military and non-military strategies. Efforts such as military operations, regional collaborations, such as the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), deradicalisation initiatives, and strategies to build community resilience indicate attempts to develop a comprehensive response. Nonetheless, the success of these initiatives depends on tackling deep-rooted structural issues such as economic exclusion, governance shortcomings, and ineffective justice systems. Thus, any long-lasting resolution requires an all-encompassing approach that combines security reforms, socio-economic growth, community-driven peace initiatives, and enhanced state accountability. This introduction sets the stage for the study to thoroughly investigate both the effects of terrorism and the avenues leading to a lasting, inclusive resolution for Nigeria.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Terrorism in Nigeria has developed into a complicated national issue. However, academic research indicates gaps in the literature regarding the multifaceted effects of the phenomenon and the efficacy of countermeasures. The current body of literature generally recognises the devastating impacts of terrorism on Nigeria's security landscape and its Development trajectory. Onuoha (2014) and Aghedo & Osumah (2012) stress that Boko Haram's insurgency has disrupted the northeastern region, diminished state authority, and led to critical humanitarian crises. Eke (2019) and Okoli & Ugwu (2021) further point out the rise of new forms of terrorism, including banditry, kidnapping for ransom, and conflicts between farmers and pastoralists, contending that these dangers arise from a mix of governance issues, socio-economic hardships, and insecure borders.

Few studies offer a comprehensive examination of the national effects of terrorism across political, economic, and social dimensions, despite many studies examining its causes and

manifestations. The majority of current research focuses on specific groups, such as Boko Haram, or on particular geographical areas, leaving little empirical evaluation of the broader national ramifications. Furthermore, non-kinetic tactics such as community involvement, deradicalisation, peacebuilding, and institutional transformation are often overlooked in favour of military measures in the solution literature. Adebajo (2020) contends that Nigeria's counterterrorism initiatives remain disjointed and that comprehensive frameworks for long-term solutions have yet to receive adequate attention.

The necessity for a more comprehensive, analytical analysis of the numerous effects of terrorism on Nigeria, as well as the inadequacies of current response tactics, is therefore the primary focus of the research challenge. By combining recent research and adopting a multifaceted approach that encompasses security, governance, and socio-economic concerns, this study aims to close this gap and advance understanding of how terrorism might be successfully reduced in Nigeria.

### **Objectives of the study**

The study has two objectives: a broad one and a specific one. The broad objective is to examine the impact of terrorism on Nigeria and the search for a solution. The specific objectives are:

- i. To examine the multi-dimensional impacts of terrorism on Nigeria's political, economic, and social structures.
- ii. To put forward a comprehensive and sustainable framework for mitigating terrorism in Nigeria, integrating security reforms, governance improvements, and community-based solutions.

### **Methodology**

This study employs a qualitative research design and uses secondary data collected from open sources. Using a content analysis method, the study sought to discern the streamlining effects of terrorism on Nigeria's security environment and its development trajectory. By searching and selecting pertinent sources from open-access databases, including academic journals, new reports, textbooks, government and non-governmental organisation reports, and seminar papers, data that are credible and relevant to the research were carefully selected.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Failed state theory underpins this study. Some of its major proponents include William Zartman (1995), one of the earliest scholars to conceptualise state collapse and failure, Jean-Germain Gros (1996), who provided a structured taxonomy of failed states and identified institutional, economic, and political roots of state failure, and Robert I. Rotberg (2004) that popularised Failed State Theory and defined failed states as those unable to provide essential political goods. This theory offers a broad perspective for understanding the complexity of terrorism in Nigeria. The state failure theory describes the collapse of state capacity and its inability to perform basic functions, such as security, healthcare, and education, due to widespread corruption, impunity, and a lack of the rule of law. A state exists to protect its residents, secure its territory, and provide social services to those who reside inside its boundaries. Failure indicates that a state is unable to fulfil its obligations. One characteristic of a completely failed state is the loss of legitimacy, along with the inability to safeguard, control, or manage its inhabitants (Rotberg, 2004). The failed state theory highlights the significance of state function and stability in international relations, and emphasises the downward effects of state failure on both domestic and global affairs (Marten, 2010).

Aside from a loss of legitimacy, economic stagnation, and political instability, other indicators of a failing or failed state include corruption, an economy at its lowest ebb, and the state's

inability to provide basic needs and services to its citizens. Political leaders would upset democratic ideals, show disrespect for the rule of law and undermine the independence of the judiciary (Rotberg, 2004).

A failed or failing state is unable to provide essential political goods, resulting in rampant lawlessness. The state cannot inspire respect among its citizens, leading to the prevalence of warfare and threats of secession from non-state groups. Consequently, these states serve as a refuge for terrorists to flourish (Piazza, 20028)

Through the lens of Failed State Theory, Nigeria can be designated a fragile state rather than a comprehensively failed one. The theory helps illustrate how insecurity, weak institutions, poor service delivery, economic challenges, and declining legitimacy collectively undermine state stability. It advocates critical reforms to strengthen security, transform institutions, improve governance, and restore public trust, thereby preventing a slide into a more profound crisis.

The state constitutes a significant security threat not only to its own populace but also to neighbouring countries and the international community at large. (Uzodike & Maiangwa, 2012, and Onapajo & Uzodike, 2012).

In Nigeria, perceived inequalities and marginalisation caused by a failed state have been cited as the contributing factor to the rise of terrorism especially in the northeastern region of Nigeria. Weak governance, porous borders, and inadequate security measures have allowed terrorist groups to operate freely without control. Failed State Theory emphasises that a functioning state must maintain a monopoly over the use of force. For Nigeria, this means strengthening the military and police through training, modernisation, and improved coordination; adopting intelligence-led security strategies to combat insurgency, banditry, and kidnapping; and decentralising policing through state policing to allow for quicker, context-specific responses. By restoring security, Nigeria can stabilise communities and rebuild citizen trust.

### **The Impact of Terrorism on Nigeria**

Terrorism has reshaped the country's political economy and social structure. The effects are mutually reinforcing because weakened governance leads to economic shrinkage, which exacerbates social fragility and breeds high-level insecurity. This pattern reveals path dependencies that make recovery challenging without comprehensive, multi-level interventions.

#### **i. Political Institutions and State Capacity**

Nigeria's state capacity has been strained by the ongoing insurgency, which has challenged territorial control, undermined the government's monopoly on legitimate force, and eroded citizens' trust in state institutions. Especially in Northeast Nigeria, which has been the epicentre of this issue, administrative reach has been reduced, affecting voter turnout, local governance, and service delivery. This has led to a cycle in which weak institutions struggle to provide security, with high-level insecurity further undermining institutional capacity (Akoji, 2024). With a high degree of centralised military solutions, this has marginalised local governance frameworks and community-led resilience, thereby hindering stabilisation efforts. Also, with fiscal and administrative attention tilted toward counterterrorism measures, this has crowded out development programs and social investment schemes that would have addressed the problem's root causes. These dynamics further aggravate political fragmentation, making reforms harder to implement and sustain in affected regions.

#### **ii. Economic Disruption and Development Trajectories**

Terrorism has forced both direct and indirect costs on Nigeria's economy. Direct costs include damage to infrastructure, attacks on supply chains, and protection expenditures. Indirect costs

manifest as reduced investor confidence, disruption in the agriculture sector, and labour implications, affecting labour security and food security. Over time, these impacts have depressed regional productivity, raised transaction costs, and exacerbated levels of poverty, especially in the Northeast and Northwest. Farmer displacement and land abandonment have reduced output, intensified food insecurity, and raised prices nationwide. Persistent insecurity has elevated risk perceptions, deterred investment and pushed up borrowing costs. Conflict-affected zones have fallen behind in infrastructure and human capital, widening regional inequalities that will be difficult to reverse (Dibia, 2021). These economic anxieties have created feedback loops in which unemployment and deprivation can increase recruitment into insurgent and criminal networks.

### iii. Social Cohesion, Displacement, and Human Security

The social effects of terrorism could be deeply entrenched and long-lasting because large-scale internal displacement tends to strain host communities and public services. At the same time, exposure to violence could inflict psychological trauma and crack communal bonds. Attacks at schools and civic spaces could degrade human capital and trust, thereby undermining projections of intergroup cooperation and national integration (Akoji, 2024). **Abrupt** school closures to avoid an attack could shrink enrollment and affect learning outcomes, thereby risking the upward mobility of a generation of students. **Also**, violence tends to intensify religious and ethnic tensions, complicating reconciliation and local peacebuilding (Dibia, 2021). **Mass** abductions, sexual violence, and caregiving burdens tend to unduly affect women and girls, with cascading implications for family stability and livelihoods. These societal cracks weaken collective effectiveness because the capacity of communities to organise for safety and shared goals is severely degraded, thereby decelerating recovery efforts even when violence subsides.

### iv. Conflict Ecosystem and Regional Spillage

Nigeria's terrorism backdrop interacts with broader triggers of insecurity, including banditry, farmer-pastoral conflicts, and militancy, to create a complex conflict ecosystem. Cross-border inflows of small arms and light weapons, porous boundaries, and regional insurgent links tend to amplify violence and complicate state responses. A range of actors comprising terrorists, criminal gangs, and self-defence groups distort lines of authority and accountability, hence intensifying the risks of escalation and human rights abuses (Nzubechukwu, 2022). More often than not, insurgent groups evolve tactics such as sporadic attacks on schools, worship places and on farmlands, mass abduction, illegitimate taxation of communities, as well as engage in unlawful governance strategies, including dispensation of shadow justice, illicit control of resources in areas that they have captured, therefore challenging conventional counter-insurgency. **Also**, regional instability around the Lake Chad basin and in the Sahel tends to sustain recruitment pipelines and logistical support systems, a situation that warrants coordinated, multi-state responses (Akoji, 2024).

### The Search for a Solution

This would involve putting forward a comprehensive, sustainable framework that integrates security reforms, governance improvements, and community-based solutions. Terrorism within a state poses a formidable challenge that demands an integrated approach; improving security capacity is necessary but not sufficient. A lasting mitigation effort would require concurrent reforms across various sectors to roll back corruption and governance gaps, a focus on targeted

socio-economic and reintegration programmes, and support for grassroots-inspired community responses that tend to restore state legitimacy and resilience (KAIPTC, 2022). However, evidence from Nigeria's counter-insurgency experience, which incorporated Operation Safe Corridor strategies and community task forces, has yet to demonstrate that hybrid schemes that pool calibrated security operations, justice and corrections reforms, and community rehabilitation have delivered the best prospects for sustainable stability.

### **i. Smart security reforms**

This takes into cognisance a professional, accountable, intelligence-driven security posture that protects citizens while minimising harms that fuel radicalisation. A sustained pressure on terrorist groups, deployment of precision operations while expanding intelligence sharing, targeted strikes, and special operations that avoid civilian casualties. Lessons from recent operations and trials show that combining military pressure with rehabilitation depletes the ranks of violent extremists (TI Defence Initiative, 2025). Furthermore, implementing transparent procurement and meritocratic promotion processes, as well as sustainable anti-corruption controls, would ensure that resources are channelled appropriately, thereby boosting capacity and legitimacy within the state. Corruption weakens operational efficiency and public trust. Furthermore, developing state and local policing prototypes would increase responsiveness in rural and semi-urban areas where state security agencies are thin. Civilian joint task forces should be strengthened with requisite training, vetting, and legal protections to avoid abuses.

### **ii. Enhancements in Governance and Rule-of-Law**

Weak governance methods and perceived fraud at the polls are core drivers of violent extremism. Governance reforms would therefore reduce terrorists' political space. Prioritising the auditability of security budgets, e-procurement, and parliamentary oversight would allow citizens to follow public resources deployed for public goods, not patronage. Evidence indicates that corrupt defence governance is associated with poor security outcomes. Timely and fair justice and accountability would go a long way towards strengthening prosecutors, forensic, and corrections capacity so that terrorism suspects face transparent, rights-respecting legal processes (UNODC, 2024). Trials of several suspects en bloc must be accompanied by procedural safeguards and measures to reduce pretrial detention and its mistreatment. In addition, there should be empowerment for local governments through conditional transfers to support security-sensitive public goods, such as health facilities, schools, and markets. Also, strengthening local grievance-redress mechanisms would reduce drivers of mobilisation towards insurgent groups.

### **iii. Community-Based Prevention, Rehabilitation and Reintegration**

Local communities are both targets and sources of resilience, with local sustainable mitigation efforts centring on indigenous ownership of prevention and reintegration frameworks. Investing in community policing, local peace committees, and information would help to detect terrorist recruitment drives, community disputes, and food insecurity promptly. Research shows communities' perspectives are critical to program design and validity. Furthermore, expanding evidence-based rehabilitation to encompass psychosocial counselling, vocational training, family mediation, and monitored reintegration is key to achieving desired outcomes in the fight against terrorism (Ike, 2022). In all cases, programs must be transparent, voluntary where possible, and tied to community ratification. Going forward, a focus on employment creation, apprenticeships, and conditional cash transfers in high-risk areas is a measure to consider. Interventions should integrate livelihoods with civic education and dispute-resolution training to reduce the pool of potential recruits.

#### **iv. Cross-cutting systems: coordination, metrics, and safeguards**

Creating a multi-ministerial secretariat to incorporate security, justice, social development, and finance, among others, and marshalling a clear theory of change with a risk matrix and regional operational plans to link the Lake Chad, Northwest, and Southeast would constitute a formidable and organic whole. UN and donor engagements can support capacity building. The use of outcome indicators such as recidivism, dispute incidence, school attendance, and economic uptake, along with independent evaluation, would help scale effective interventions and deactivate harmful ones. Also, embedding independent oversight through the ombudsman, civil society monitoring, and media access would help prevent abuses that have become catalysts for extremism. Community trust is a force multiplier, and abuses tend to rapidly corrode that trust (Ugwueze, Ngwu & Onuoha, 2021).

#### **Discussion of Findings**

The analysis of the impact of terrorism on Nigeria underscores the deep and multifaceted challenges the country faces due to insurgent activities, particularly in the Northeast region. The findings highlight how terrorism disrupts political, economic, and social systems, with a cyclical, self-reinforcing pattern that hinders recovery efforts. The examination also stresses that a holistic approach, integrating security, governance, and community resilience strategies, is crucial for mitigating terrorism's long-term effects and ensuring sustainable peace.

The weakened capacity of Nigeria's political institutions is one of the most significant findings of the analysis. Terrorism has severely undermined the government's territorial control, its monopoly on legitimate force, and the trust that citizens have in state institutions. The erosion of state legitimacy has reduced administrative reach, especially in regions affected by insurgency. Furthermore, the reliance on military responses to terrorism has crowded out local governance initiatives and marginalised community-led efforts to build resilience.

The economic impact of terrorism in Nigeria is both direct and indirect. Directly, terrorist activities have damaged vital infrastructure, disrupted supply chains, and necessitated significant security expenditures. Indirectly, terrorism has undermined investor confidence, disrupted agriculture, and displaced labour forces. The findings indicate that terrorism has significantly disrupted the agricultural sector, leading to food insecurity and increased poverty levels. The displacement of farmers and abandonment of farmlands have worsened food production, which in turn has driven up food prices across the country.

Moreover, the prolonged insecurity has elevated risk perceptions, making it more difficult for Nigeria to attract foreign investment. The feedback loops between economic decline, unemployment, and radicalisation are troubling, as they create a vicious cycle where economic deprivation exacerbates the conditions that allow insurgent and criminal groups to thrive. The findings suggest that addressing economic grievances in the affected regions, particularly through targeted investment and job creation, is critical for breaking this cycle.

The social consequences of terrorism in Nigeria are profound and long-lasting. The findings highlight how large-scale displacement has strained host communities and public services, while violence has contributed to psychological trauma and the breakdown of communal bonds. Attacks on schools and civic spaces have degraded human capital, undermining trust and making intergroup cooperation more difficult. The disruption of education, with school closures and reduced enrollment, is particularly concerning, as it jeopardises the prospects of a generation of Nigerian youth.

Nigeria's terrorism problem cannot be viewed in isolation. The findings demonstrate how terrorism intersects with other forms of insecurity, such as banditry, farmer-pastoral conflicts, and regional insurgencies in the Lake Chad Basin and Sahel region. The porous borders and the flow of small arms and light weapons across the region have intensified the conflict ecosystem, making it more difficult for Nigerian security forces to contain the violence. The involvement of multiple actors, including terrorist groups, criminal gangs, and local militias, complicates the state's response and escalates the risk of human rights abuses.

The analysis argues that a comprehensive, sustainable approach is needed to address the multifaceted challenges posed by terrorism in Nigeria. The findings highlight that improvements in security alone are insufficient; a broader, integrated framework is necessary to restore state legitimacy and build long-term stability. This framework should combine intelligence-driven operations, better resource allocation, and anti-corruption measures to strengthen the state's capacity. The findings stress that military pressure combined with rehabilitation programs has shown promising results in reducing the ranks of violent extremists.

Strengthening the transparency of security budgets and implementing anti-corruption measures are critical to reducing the political space for insurgents. The findings highlight the importance of strengthening judicial systems and ensuring that terrorism suspects are tried through fair, transparent, and rights-respecting processes. Local communities play a central role in both the impact and mitigation of terrorism. The findings suggest that community policing, local peace committees, and psychosocial support for individuals impacted by terrorism are essential for building local resilience. The rehabilitation of former combatants, supported by vocational training and economic reintegration programs, is a key component of this approach.

Establishing a multi-ministerial secretariat and integrating regional security efforts are critical to addressing the interconnectedness of Nigeria's security challenges. The findings emphasise that coordinated actions, transparent monitoring, and independent oversight can ensure that interventions are effective and that abuses do not undermine progress.

## **Conclusion**

This paper contributes to the existing literature on terrorism in Nigeria by providing a nuanced, multi-dimensional analysis of the complex interplay among political, economic, and social factors exacerbated by insurgency. It highlights how terrorism not only destabilises governance and weakens state capacity but also fosters long-term economic decline and erodes social cohesion. The findings underscore that the impact of terrorism in Nigeria is not just a matter of immediate violence but part of a broader, self-reinforcing cycle of insecurity, poverty, and political fragmentation that perpetuates instability.

By emphasising the interdependent nature of these challenges, this paper makes an important contribution to understanding the persistence of terrorism in Nigeria. It moves beyond conventional security-focused approaches to underscore the importance of governance, economic development, and community resilience in addressing the root causes and long-term effects of insurgency. The analysis also sheds light on the critical need for localised, community-driven interventions and the importance of integrating grassroots perspectives into counterterrorism strategies. In doing so, it builds on existing research that has often focused on military and top-down solutions, advocating a more holistic, inclusive, and sustainable approach.

Furthermore, the paper contributes to the growing body of work on post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding, particularly in the context of terrorism. It underscores that effective

counterterrorism requires a multifaceted strategy that incorporates not only military and security reforms but also governance improvements, social cohesion initiatives, and long-term rehabilitation and reintegration programs. In this regard, the research highlights the role of local governance and community-based responses, which have often been overlooked in national policy discussions.

The findings also provide insights into the broader regional dimensions of Nigeria's terrorism problem, particularly the transnational aspects that tie Nigeria's security challenges to instability in the Lake Chad Basin and the Sahel. This regional perspective aligns with and extends existing literature on the interconnectedness of security threats in West Africa, emphasising the need for coordinated, cross-border responses.

Ultimately, this paper offers a comprehensive framework for addressing terrorism in Nigeria, integrating security, governance, social resilience, and regional cooperation. It challenges existing paradigms by advocating for a balanced, integrated approach that addresses both the symptoms and the underlying causes of terrorism. This contribution is significant in the context of the ongoing search for sustainable solutions to Nigeria's security crisis, providing both theoretical and practical insights for policymakers, researchers, and practitioners working towards peace and stability in the region.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the objectives of examining the multi-dimensional impacts of terrorism on Nigeria's political, economic, and social structures, and proposing a comprehensive framework for mitigating terrorism through integrated solutions, the following two recommendations emerge:

#### **i. Strengthen Local Governance and Community-Led Resilience Initiatives**

One of the core findings of the paper is that weak governance structures, particularly at the local level, have contributed to the exacerbation of terrorism and insecurity in Nigeria. A significant recommendation, therefore, is to empower local governments and strengthen community-led resilience initiatives. This can be achieved through several actions, such as decentralisation of security measures. While national military forces play a crucial role in counterterrorism, the government should invest in expanding the capacity of local security and policing agencies. Localised policing, community patrols, and joint civilian security task forces should be bolstered with adequate resources, training, and legal protections to ensure they can effectively respond to local security threats and help restore trust in state institutions.

Community-driven peacebuilding and reintegration programs are essential to mitigating the appeal of extremist groups. Initiatives such as local peace committees and education-based interventions focused on conflict resolution, vocational training, and psychosocial support should be integrated into local governance frameworks. By investing in community-led resilience programs, the Nigerian government can expand its reach and legitimacy while enabling communities to better resist terrorist influence.

Local governance reforms should also prioritise greater autonomy for local leaders and the creation of localised decision-making frameworks that allow communities to design, implement, and monitor security and development initiatives. This would reduce the perception of state neglect and foster local ownership of peacebuilding processes.

#### **ii. Multi-Sectoral Coordination and Regional Cooperation for Sustainable Security**

Given the cross-border nature of insecurity in Nigeria, particularly in the Sahel and Lake Chad Basin regions, a significant recommendation is to strengthen multisectoral coordination and

enhance **regional cooperation** to address terrorism. This entails establishing a national and regional counterterrorism coordination mechanism. The Nigerian government should establish a multi-ministerial body to coordinate security, development, and humanitarian efforts across affected regions. This coordination should involve ministries of defence, justice, social development, and finance, as well as local government representatives. Such a body would ensure that all relevant sectors work in tandem to address the interconnected drivers of terrorism, from political instability to economic deprivation and social unrest.

Also, there should be enhanced regional security and intelligence sharing. Given the transnational nature of terrorist groups operating in Nigeria, it is crucial to improve intelligence-sharing frameworks and joint military operations with neighbouring countries in the Lake Chad Basin and the broader Sahel region. Collaborative regional efforts supported by international partners such as the UN, AU, and ECOWAS are necessary to counter the flow of weapons, militants, and resources that sustain insurgent groups. By fostering stronger regional counterterrorism coalitions, Nigeria can improve its ability to neutralise insurgent networks, prevent cross-border terrorist activity, and address shared vulnerabilities in areas such as weapons proliferation, refugee flows, and insurgent recruitment. These efforts should be complemented by cross-border economic development programs aimed at addressing the root causes of extremism, such as poverty and lack of economic opportunity, which often drive recruitment into terrorist groups. Investments in infrastructure, education, and local economic opportunities should be coordinated across borders to reduce regional inequalities and strengthen the resilience of affected communities.

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