

# X-RAYING COST OF SECURITY SECTOR GOVERNANCE, HUMAN SECURITY AND REFORMS IN NIGERIA

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.57233/gujos.v4i3.2>

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## Abstract

Everywhere, security is the conscious effort to stabilize peace. The quest of the entrepreneurs of terror to profit from lasting violence causes them to weaponize insecurity in Nigeria. This article examines how the cost of security sector governance predisposes citizens to insecurity and justifies reforms in Nigeria. The study qualitatively reviewed secondary data from journal articles, textbooks, newspapers, archival and internet sources for thematic and content analysis. It used the Human Security notion as its theoretical framework to analyze how the cost of security sector governance impacts human security to justify reforms. The findings indicated that an intimidating crime wave, opaque procurement culture, and reckless discretionary disbursement of security allocation drive the high cost of security sector governance in Nigeria. These factors significantly facilitate the extravagance of security policymakers and implementers to pauperize Nigerians further and expose them to endless terrorist invasions. It concluded that the cost of security sector governance worsened the sporadic outbreak of victimisation and mass discontent against terrorism in Nigeria. The paper suggests adopting an expenditure framework in which gender mainstreaming, people-centred decision-making initiatives, and transparent accountability undergirded disciplined financial governance for recovery in Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Cost of security governance; Entrepreneurs of terror; Human security; Peace building; Nigeria.

## **Introduction**

Across the world, there is an acknowledged antipathy between sustainable development and the situations of crises and anarchy. Therefore, an environment that is equitable and supportive of sustainable development is necessary for security sector governance, which justifies the cost incurred by the government. In the West, governments prioritize security and invest a lot of money in it to ensure the safety of life and property. The Non-aligned Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) recommends a 2% of GDP on defense expenditure. As a NATO member, the UK is, therefore, committed to disbursing 2% of GDP on defense in 2023. In the 2023/24 financial year, the United Kingdom spent 54.2 billion pounds on defense which was expected to rise to 57.1 billion pounds representing a 4.5% in concrete terms (Kirk-Wade, 2024). Defense expenditure by the United States accounted for about 40% of military expenditures by countries throughout the world in 2023 (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2023). The defense spending of the US went up by \$55 billion from 2022 to 2023. The United States disburses more funds on defense than the next nine countries combined. The United States spent \$916 billion on national defense in 2023 (Peterson Foundation, 2024).

African countries, too, have inherited the Western governance procedure after colonization. Somalia is one of the African countries whose government spends more than one-third of its national budget on security. In the case of Nigeria, right from her independence in 1960, the country has witnessed numerous internal and external security threats and unrests which range from constitutional tragedies; election manipulations; census malpractices; civil war; inter-state boundary conflicts; coups and counter coups; and now, terrorism-driven insurgency. With globalization and the rapid development of technology, criminal techniques have become sophisticated. Therefore, confronting criminals in contemporary Nigeria requires more than conventional strategies. This is at a cost. Apart from the prohibitive cost of imported items, the shady procurement culture imposes very high costs on security apparatuses.

The proliferation of security outfits at local levels to counter-terrorism manifests the reality of security having assumed a human and institutional status in its fears and effects. However, the curve of security became worrisome when some politicians engaged and equipped unemployed youths to hijack political power, through violence, for a fee. Upon their victories, these politicians abandoned their foot soldiers who then resorted to using the illegally acquired arms to seek relevance in the underground economy of terrorism. They

became terrorists known as *Boko Haram* with splinter groups adopting various labels such as bandits, kidnappers, organ harvesters, and human traffickers. They unleash varying levels of horror on innocent Nigerians.

In response to the agonizing calls across Nigeria for government intervention, it allocated colossal sums of funds for security sector governance. It became tragic that the sums allotted to security on one hand were deviously repossessed with another by these uncaring politicians. The cost of security sector governance, year-in-year-out is too enormous for its verifiable impacts on the lives of Nigerians. It is as if the more Nigeria invested in security, the more Nigerians experience widespread insecurity. To stabilize the customary security profile of Nigeria, a strategically coherent, carefully articulated, and implementable reform policy that emphasizes a long-term process of peace and security-building commitment is inevitable.

That the world is engulfed in rising terrorism and its disabling effects are rapidly turning most conflict-ridden countries of Africa into unviable states justifies this study. The cost of safeguarding security, therefore, is skyrocketing in light of global inflation. The security crises of Nigeria have become progressively multifaceted with armed groups and non-state actors exploiting the weakened influence of Nigeria. The national picture of resurgence presents in the northeast of Boko Haram, in the north central and northwest, armed gangs, in the Southeast, secessionist violence, and in the Southwest, gang-related issues. It is only a revitalized security that can douse the nationwide frequency of violence. This can be done effectively only in the context of funds. Regrettably, corruption exacerbates this trend, particularly in the context of procurement malpractices. Therefore, interrogating the rising cost of security and the profligacy of the stakeholders that deprives investment in the sector of relevance in the context of human security and reforms contributes to a deeper understanding of the dynamics of insecurity, development, and general security in Nigeria

This study presents a science-based context for effective, inclusive, and accountable security values to drive an inexpensive blueprint to reduce government competence to fine-tune policy in response to public exasperations (Freedom House, 2023) to stabilize the cost of maintaining security. For clarity, the study is structured into five sections. The first section presents the introduction, conceptual clarification, and literature review. The second offers the theoretical framework on which the article bases its analysis. The third provides

the methodology, while the fourth presents the results and discussion. The fifth segment is the conclusion and recommendations.

### **Study Objective**

This paper examines how reforming the cost of security sector governance predisposes citizens to human security in Nigeria.

### **Research Questions**

- i. What is the correlation between the cost of security sector governance and human security in Nigeria?
- ii. How does the cost of security sector governance impact public security in Nigeria?
- iii. In what ways can reforming the cost of security sector governance predispose citizens to human security in Nigeria?

The correlation between the costs of security governance and human security is the gap in knowledge that this study hopes to fill.

### **Conceptual Clarification**

#### **Cost of Security Sector Governance**

For this paper, the cost of security sector governance is any fund disbursed on public security administration-associated items.

#### **Human Security**

The human security concept drives the agenda of an “effective and accountable state security provision, management, and oversight within a framework of democratic governance, respect for human rights, and the rule of law” (Bryden & Chappuis, 2015, p.3).

#### **Security Sector Reform**

This article holds security sector reform to imply the experience-driven interventions intended to seamlessly integrate a people-centred approach into the existing state-centred approach crafted to improve the good governance of its security sectors, cognizant of global best practices.

### **Literature Review**

Globally, human safety justifies public spending on defense. To make partnerships drive security allocation and expenditure to prevent abuses requires security sector governance to respond essentially to civil disbursement oversight. Globally, security

spending has sharply risen more than ever before. Specifically in Africa, it has been volatile (Obasi, Asogwa, & Nwafee, 2018). In 2019, Africa's security expenditure was approximately \$41.2 billion. Algeria was the highest military spender with \$10.3 billion in 2019 (Nantan, Diego, Wezeman, & Wezeman, 2019). In 2014, 2015, and 2016, the security sector allocation was N932 billion, N969 billion, and N1.063 trillion respectively (Dunne & Tian, 2016). In 2019, Nigeria was the second largest spender on security in sub-Saharan Africa as it allotted over \$1.9 billion to that sector. The amount was higher by 8.2 percent than its 2018 allocation (Nantan et al., 2019).

Allocation of funds to the security sector to safeguard citizens' safety makes it "the single most funded public sector in Nigeria" (Lawal, 2020, p. 2). Therefore, the government steers "the changing boundaries between the public, private, and voluntary actors..." to make governance embrace a range of themes such as "the process of engagement (politics), the substantive issues (policy), and the institutional structures through which state and other actors relate to one another (polity)" (Hardiman, 2014, p. 228). Despite this technical disposition, 55 citizens stole 6.8 billion dollars between 2006 and 2013 to further under-develop Nigeria (Mohammed, 2016). Alone, Sambo Dasuki, Nigeria's former national security adviser, misapplied US\$2.1 billion, and N19.4 billion was initially earmarked to procure arms for the army (Nnoch, 2016). Similarly, Olisa Metuh, former national secretary of the People's Democratic Party, PDP, diverted N400 million and US\$2 million, initially earmarked for national security to vote-buying (Yahaya, 2020).

According to Lyons, Moore & Maurer (2024, p. 2.), "In fragile countries, in particular, many people feel unprotected by their ... security institutions. When soldiers or police do not serve the common good, societal trust — so necessary for sustained prosperity and well-being — remains elusive. Privileged groups, including those in uniform, may reap the benefits of favouritism and repression, while development is denied to many" It is against the background of economic and cost of security sector governance, that the foremost public sector defense enterprises and the key security stakeholders have continued to be burdened with cost overruns and delays of such critical projects (Saxena, 2022). Therefore, to help establish security services that offer authentic human security is a direct interest of the in-country presence of the United Nations: "... to support national actors in achieving their security, peace, and development goals ... the development of effective and accountable security institutions based on non-discrimination, full respect for human rights

and the rule of law is essential” (United Nations General Assembly and Security Council, 2008).

Human security is anchored on the suitable security of vulnerable populations in a society. To promote this norm, security sector reform, should be “...based on the reform and rebuilding of a state security sector... to provide security to the state and its people effectively under democratic principles” (Atelhe, Anyabe & Abunimye, 2016, p. 155). To the extent that empirical evidence suggests that countries afflicted with “poorly governed security sectors have a 30 to 45 percent higher risk of violence and civil conflict,” security sector reform is lacking and now seriously required (Kool & Sweijis, 2020, p. 20).

### **Theoretical Framework**

This article uses the Human Security Notion as the theoretical premise to explain the criticality of individuals, rather than the state, to security concerns. When states and their citizens face security threats, such challenges are transnational and require a peace-building approach to human security for suitable resolutions to ensure sustainable security sector governance (Bryden, N’Diaye & Olonisakin, 2008). However, the United Nations Development Programme acknowledged seven components that the human security concept values as threats to economic security; food security; health security; environmental security; personal security; community security; and political security (Bajpai, 2000, p.15-16). The security situation in Nigeria indicates the quantum of threats that compromise human safety. The initial threat was Boko Haram, later banditry, kidnapping for ransom, and ritual killing were added. Since every aspect of human life was afflicted by the generic insecurity in Nigeria, there was a need for an intervention to fulfil one of the fundamental principles that undergird the existence of government. In its quest to guarantee human safety, successive governments have confronted the menace of terrorism. At some points, the peace building approach was adopted. Even when the peace building approach is ordinarily the cheapest option, treading that inexpensive path still involves elements of governance and the spending of funds to realize the seven components of the UNDP in Nigeria through meaningful reforms.

### **Methodology**

This paper adopted the qualitative descriptive method. It is a theoretical interrogation of the nexus between the cost of security governance and human security, using secondary data garnered from journal publications, magazines, newspapers, textbooks, archival, and

internet sources. The exclusion/inclusion criteria are: articles were included if they were published between 2010 and 2024, published in the English language, and concentrated on the experience of the cost of security sector governance. On the other hand, articles were excluded if they were published before 2010; were not published in the English language, and were not related to the cost of security governance that may be adapted to suit the account of the phenomenon in Nigeria. By sticking with scientific procedures, we steered the article to harvest objective findings that are both valid and reliable. This approach facilitated a systematic review of earlier studies in this area of research to capture a contextual understanding of the study terrain. The data were thematically and content analysed to shape the discussion and conclusion.

## **Discussion**

### **Cost of Security Sector Governance and Human Safety in Nigeria**

Across the world, it is a truism that the security of a state is instrumental in its inclusive development. For this reason, the military organization is an institution for the maintenance of security in any state, and for the protection of the territorial integrity of the state. A country's military is an institution that is saddled with the responsibility to use coercive instruments, and use of weapons to defend the corporate entity by waging war, if necessary, to quash any insurrection (United States Armed Forces, 2017). In the South-South region, non-state structures such as militant tensions and ritual killings exist. In the southeast, Nigeria experiences tensions over Biafran secession. In the northeast, there is an active armed banditry, Boko haram horror and kidnapping have remained an enormous and profitable business across Nigeria (Abiodun, Opatoki, Adeyemo & Obi, 2020). The immense enlargement of the Regiment caused the establishment of provisional camps across Nigeria. This generated civil-military tensions with local civilians complaining of brutal conduct by the recruits (Library of Congress Country Studies, 2018).

Abiodun et al (2020) agree that security usually remains a dynamic condition that encompasses the relative ability of a state to counter threats to its core values and interests. According to Abiodun et al (2020), Nigeria's security should be based on a holistic look that views the citizenry as the primary beneficiaries of security and developmental benefits a state offers. Therefore, Nigeria's security involves efforts to strengthen the capacity of the Nigerian government towards promoting its interests to contain internal and external attacks,

and crimes, kick out corruption, promote growth and development, and improve the welfare of life of the citizenry.

Unusually, between 2014 and 2018, accredited security spending went up to N24.12 billion with extra military internal operations, and in 2015, N42.17 billion was allocated to military internal operations. Also, the 2016 budget in Nigeria indicated that military allocation formed N21 billion extra military internal operations spending; N25.00 billion for 2017, and considerably, security expenditure rose geometrically in 2018 with supplementary allocation in military internal operations of N75.00 billion (BudgIT Nigeria, 2020). While justifications exist for increased security funding because of the sanctity of human lives involved, there is a need for monitoring mechanisms to check the excesses of saboteurs (Adeshina, 2020). The government increased the budget allocation for the security sector by 11.3% for 2021. The budget which was ₦190.65 billion in 2020 now prospects an 11.3% spike to ₦212.32bn for the following year (Ibemere, 2020). Military Expenditure in Nigeria was 3109.40 USD Million in 2022 and for 2023, it rose to 3191.90 USD Million (SIPRI, 2023). On November 29, 2023, a budget proposal of N27.5 trillion for 2024 to the National Assembly, defense and security was allocated N3.25 trillion, the largest single allocation to any sector, at over 12 percent of the total budget (Daily Trust Editorial Board, 2023).

### **How the Cost of Security Sector Governance Impacts Public Security in Nigeria**

The justification for offering comprehensive administrative expenses as a cost of governance comes from the administrative expenses borne by the government in its daily affairs (Ufoeze, Okoro & Ibenta, 2017). The extent of the profligacy of public officers in the management of security sector affairs imposes additional costs on the public treasury. Despite the external and internal debt profile of Nigeria, findings indicated that the Nigerian military recklessly deploys such funds to procure old-fashioned items through procurement processes that are usually opaque. The events of 2014 in which Boko Haram killed innocent Nigerians as the military squandered more than 7 billion on overseas excursions reinforced this claim (Abiodun, Asaolu, & Ndubuisi, 2020).

In a study conducted in Nigeria, findings indicated that despite the huge expenses of military operations, security remains devastated due to “bad governance, corruption, and non-transparent procurement activities... thereby creating some loopholes in national politics, economy, and weakened national security respectively” (Abiodun et.al, 2020, p.

12). Experience has shown that the security vote idea has become a secretive, fake disbursement-driven national corruption agenda that gulps an estimated N241.2 billion (\$670 million) annually (Page, 2018).

Since the advent of Boko Haram in 2009, terrorism has unleashed socioeconomically harmful effects on Nigerians regardless of whichever part of the country they reside in because the majority of the expenditures that would have enhanced the military's capacity to face security challenges head-on have been compromised. These ancillary interests manifest in the equipment quality, logistics, and implementation of goals. Therefore, reports confirm that bandits who have more sophisticated weapons killed innocent citizens, and displaced thousands of individuals, and communities (Ademola, 2021). Abiodun et al., (2020, p.29), lamented that "Insecurity emanating from the deficiencies in financial management and military spending in Nigeria poses dangerous threats to national security ..." as "Military financial recklessness and the absence of meaningful oversight functions have led "to loss of over 28,000 Nigerian lives".

About 769 students had been kidnapped as of December 2020 in at least five school kidnapping incidents in northern Nigeria. Therefore, between March 2020 and June 2021, kidnappers intimidated their captives and ripped them off of a minimum of \$18.34m as ransom to ensure their release (Iyora, 2021). On July 12, 2019, along the Ondo-Ore road, Funke Olakurin was killed by suspected Fulani herdsmen (Adebayo, 2019). Chief Olu Falae, the former Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF), was kidnapped on his farm (Olumide, 2021). Consequently, this diversionary local instability justifies Nigeria being rated among the top ten countries for kidnapping (Tayo & Obisesan, 2021). In Nigeria, kidnapping has not only evolved into a rewarding underground economy in which a minimum of N1,048 billion was paid as ransoms in that period, but it has also become deadlier, leaving 1056 individuals murdered out of 1130 reported kidnap incidents.

On average, somebody is killed each time there is an attempted kidnap. Zamfara leads among the afflicted states with the number of kidnap incidents (132), number of kidnap victims (1,639), and number of civilian deaths (146). Not less than 7,568 people were abducted between July 2023 and June 2024 in 1,130 incidents across Nigeria. Contemporaneously, kidnappers demanded a minimum of ₦10,995,090,000 as ransom but got ₦1,048,110,000, a meager 9.5% of the amount demanded, showing that kidnappers have become less appropriately target-focused in their victimization plan (Sbmintel, 2024). However, the cost of security governance can be measured by the respect for fiscal

openness, the operation within the ethos of the rule of law, efficiency and effectiveness, security sector corruption, and military effectiveness (Banini, 2019).

### **Reforming the cost of security sector governance and public safety in Nigeria**

The reform process is a response to the constantly changing political, strategic, informational, and technological landscape, in addition to modifications in global power dynamics (Giraldo, 2021). The core goal of the security sector reform focuses on the defense, security, and justice institutions. It seeks to make them function efficiently and render accessible public services that resonate with the justice and security needs of the people. It achieves this by consistently operating with the principles of good governance, recognizing human rights, and respecting the rule of law. Security Sector Reform & Governance is institution-building and good governance promotion close to the pinnacle of national power. Given its highly political nature and its centrality to the in-country success of the United Nations, senior United Nations leaders must engage on SSR&G early, strategically, and consistently, including by facilitating dialogue on security governance arrangements (United Nations Security Council, 2022a).

Throughout their engagement, United Nations leaders need to be aware of the United Nations principles for SSR&G, including inclusive national ownership; the primacy of political solutions; and ensuring a governance-focused approach at all stages of reform (United Nations Security Council, 2022b). Moreover, an unreformed security sector represents a catastrophic terminal disorder to attain “sustainable development, democracy, and peace” (Bryden, N’Diaye & Olonisakin, 2008, p.6). If the first step to reestablishing stability and security is acknowledging that the government has lost control (Campbell & Rotberg, 2021, cited by MaiBasira, 2021), then, to reform, there is a need to adopt practical development initiatives to stabilize the electricity supply.

### **Conclusion**

The primary focus of governance is to ensure that the lives and property of individuals within its jurisdiction are protected. The spiraling character of organized crime and the implications of victimization for social, political, and economic prosperity contradict this normative expectation. There is virtually none of Nigeria's six geopolitical zones that do not suffer one form of attack by violence or the other. The state of the security of lives and property in Nigeria compelled this study to examine the implications of the cost of security sector governance for human security and reforms. It investigated the correlation

between the cost of security sector governance and human safety which causes insecurity in Nigeria. It examined ways the cost of security sector governance impacts human security in Nigeria and studied how reforming the cost of security sector governance predisposes citizens to public security in Nigeria. The article condemns the stereotypical reference to Nigerians as “bloody civilians” because it undermines military submission to civil authority. There is no doubt that the cost of security sector governance considerably impacts public security and other sectors of Nigerian life.

### **Recommendations**

The paper recommends the following measures to enhance policy guidance and implementation:

- i. Security stakeholders should encourage sharing knowledge to enrich security sector governance and reform in Nigeria.
- ii. The legislature should legalize civilian oversight functions in the security procurement process and criminalize the pejorative reference to Nigerians by the military as bloody Nigerians to end the era of superiority complex and curb wasteful discretionary spending.
- iii. The media and civil society should be involved in security sector reform and governance to guarantee transparent military expenditure for the public good.
- iv. Nigeria must reduce its staff strength and deploy e-accounting and e-auditing systems in security fiscal management.

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