

CORRUPTION, TERRORISM, AND WARS: LEGAL STRATEGIES TO COMBAT CORRUPTION AND TERRORISM FOR ENHANCED SECURITY AND ECONOMIC STABILITY, FRAMEWORKS ADDRESSING THE IMPACT OF WARS ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND MILITARY RESILIENCE (NIGERIA AS A CASE STUDY)

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Abstract:

The persistent interplay between corruption, terrorism, and armed conflict continues to undermine security and economic stability in many developing States, with particularly severe implications for sustainable development and institutional resilience. This paper critically examines the adequacy and effectiveness of Nigeria's legal and institutional frameworks in addressing these interconnected threats. Using Nigeria as a case study, the research explores how corruption undermines counterterrorism efforts, weakens military capacity, and diverts resources intended for development, thereby exacerbating insecurity and economic fragility.

Adopting a doctrinal and analytical approach, the study try to evaluate key legal instruments, including anti-corruption laws, counterterrorism legislation, and regulatory frameworks guiding military operations and conflict management. It further assesses the role of enforcement agencies and institutional mechanisms in implementing these laws, highlighting gaps such as weak accountability structures, selective enforcement, and limited inter-agency coordination.

The paper also investigates the broader impact of prolonged conflict on sustainable development, emphasizing disruptions to infrastructure, human capital, and economic productivity. It argues that the absence of integrated legal strategies that simultaneously address corruption and terrorism diminishes the effectiveness of security interventions and undermines military resilience.

Findings reveal that while Nigeria possesses robust body of laws, deficiencies in enforcement and governance significantly constrain their impact. The paper concludes by proposing reforms aimed at strengthening legal enforcement, enhancing institutional transparency, and aligning security frameworks with

sustainable development objectives. By situating legal strategies within the broader nexus of security and development, this study contributes to policy and academic discourse on building resilient systems in conflict-affected states.

1.0. INTRODUCTION

Corruption, terrorism and armed conflict constitute interconnected threats to national security, economic stability and sustainable development, particularly in developing States such as Nigeria. While each phenomenon presents distinct legal and institutional challenges, their interaction often produces a cycle in which corruption weakens state Institutions, facilitates the diversion of public resources and undermines the effectiveness of security interventions, while terrorism and prolonged armed conflict further erode governance structures and economic capacity. In Nigeria, persistent insecurity has consequently generated significant implications for public infrastructure, human capital, investment, revenue mobilisation and the capacity of government to deliver essential services.

The existence of extensive legal and institutional mechanisms for combating corruption and terrorism does not, however, necessarily guarantee effective enforcement. Nigeria has enacted various laws addressing corruption, money laundering, terrorist financing and terrorism, while establishing specialised institutions responsible for investigation, prosecution, financial intelligence and national security. Nevertheless, challenges relating to enforcement, accountability, institutional coordination and effective utilisation of public resources continue to affect the practical impact of these frameworks. These challenges are particularly significant where corruption affects defence procurement, security expenditure, intelligence gathering and the operational capacity of institutions responsible for combating terrorism.

Against this background, this paper examines the nexus between corruption, terrorism and armed conflict in Nigeria, with particular emphasis on the adequacy and effectiveness of the existing legal and institutional frameworks. It further considers the consequences of prolonged conflict for sustainable development, economic stability and military resilience. The paper argues that addressing these challenges requires more than isolated anti-corruption or counterterrorism measures; rather, Nigeria requires an integrated legal and institutional strategy that strengthens accountability, improves inter-agency coordination, safeguards security resources and aligns national security interventions with sustainable-development objectives. Such an approach is

essential for building resilient institutions capable of responding effectively to corruption, terrorism and the broader consequences of armed conflict.

2.0. THE NEXUS BETWEEN CORRUPTION, TERRORISM AND ARMED CONFLICT IN NIGERIA

2.1 Conceptualising Corruption, Terrorism, War and Military Resilience

Corruption may broadly be understood as the abuse of entrusted power for private or sectional advantage. In the Nigerian legal context, corruption encompasses conduct such as bribery, dishonest enrichment, abuse of office and other practices criminalised under the relevant anti-corruption legislation¹. Its significance to national security extends beyond ordinary financial misconduct because corruption can distort the allocation and utilisation of public resources, particularly where such resources are intended for defence, intelligence, policing and other security functions. The United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) recognises corruption as a phenomenon capable of undermining institutions, the rule of law and sustainable development.²

Terrorism, in contrast, involves the use or threat of violence for purposes intended to intimidate a population or compel a government or international organisation to act or refrain from acting. Under Nigeria's Terrorism (Prevention and Prohibition) Act 2022, terrorist conduct encompasses a range of acts involving serious violence, threats, financing, facilitation and other forms of support for terrorist activities.³ The legal characterisation is important because terrorism is not merely a conventional criminal phenomenon, it presents a direct challenge to the authority of the State and its capacity to protect persons, property and public institutions.

Armed conflict refers to sustained organised violence between States or between governmental forces and organised non-State armed groups, subject to the applicable rules of international humanitarian law. Nigeria's prolonged confrontation with terrorist and insurgent organisations, particularly in the North-East, demonstrates the difficulty of maintaining a strict separation

¹ CORRUPT PRACTICES AND OTHER RELATED OFFENCES ACT, 2000

² United Nations, United Nations Convention against Corruption (adopted 31 October 2003, entered into force 14 December 2005) 2349 UNTS 41. https://www.google.com/goto?url=CAESggEB6zswFe7h0Lj3xzWntc1KJ-RWRbSH1qM22VaVcLlxDk0VArvvNcuX68wwXgggGFjZyQ8Np98geFITldHmyJPhwJCgNcFC6H4Luli_GMfpG87jE6KKpSgEqJCGoQV60NR2tvntZSvOwvLLZd_fRRFcLhHTVR_3G-BrUqbFSJbO0Qmx

³ Federal Republic of Nigeria, Terrorism (Prevention and Prohibition) Act 2022.

between terrorism, insurgency and armed conflict. The International Committee of the Red Cross has emphasised that the classification of a situation as an armed conflict depends on the intensity of violence and the organisation of the parties, rather than merely on the terminology used by governments or armed groups.⁴ This distinction has important legal consequences for the application of international humanitarian law and the regulation of military operations.

Military resilience may be understood as the capacity of the armed forces and supporting institutions to maintain, adapt and restore operational effectiveness in the face of prolonged or changing security threats. It encompasses more than the possession of military equipment; it includes effective leadership, reliable logistics, trained personnel, intelligence capabilities, institutional integrity, sustainable financing and the ability to adapt to evolving forms of warfare. Within the Nigerian context, military resilience must therefore be considered alongside institutional accountability and the lawful and efficient management of defence resources.⁵

2.2 Interrelationship between Corruption, Terrorism and Armed Conflict

The relationship between corruption, terrorism and armed conflict is mutually reinforcing rather than linear. Armed conflict creates conditions in which oversight mechanisms may weaken, public expenditure may become less transparent and illicit markets may expand. These conditions can create opportunities for corrupt practices, while corruption can simultaneously weaken the State's ability to prevent and respond to terrorism. The result is a cycle in which institutional weakness facilitates insecurity, and insecurity in turn creates additional opportunities for institutional abuse.

The relationship is particularly evident in environments where terrorist organisations operate alongside illicit economies. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has documented the connection between organised crime, illicit financial flows and terrorist financing, noting that terrorist organisations may exploit criminal activities and other illicit sources to obtain

⁴ International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), How is the Term “Armed Conflict” Defined in International Humanitarian Law? Opinion Paper (March 2008).

https://www.google.com/goto?url=CAESTAHRzAVw9MNobv1251nLeRVv_LCfRRkgaB3B2l5jMY-TESqleM_PJbZ7wxwFrbXo4k4P8dM490FeoqkKZZbFIXH793d_6tOB78fz5s

⁵ UN Security Council Resolutions 1373 and 2462

https://www.google.com/goto?url=CAESjQEB6zswFdWgeOdKAtv6pKaERP6M9e27ItnjV5CaUZI_VPXmJg4dFMfeIlf9YND4QUiV_IJ3UHGjHZuPQs67nbFxnQrwp0Clun-lojqbk0G2G7s9DTmJ3MtEtKq7MurPgQnuevH7f9wkRmWlq9RaAow9dpvkWEF5qQ8w37E4waVUUCir69tr5b0Q_GhmSlz4

resources.⁶Corruption can facilitate this process by allowing illicit goods, funds or persons to move through regulatory and security controls. Consequently, the effectiveness of counterterrorism cannot be assessed solely by the number of arrests or military operations undertaken; it also depends on the integrity of institutions responsible for controlling financial, territorial and logistical networks.

Armed conflict can also intensify corruption by increasing emergency expenditure and reducing the effectiveness of ordinary accountability mechanisms. Procurement processes may be accelerated on security grounds, information may be classified, and resources may be channelled through specialised arrangements that are difficult for conventional oversight institutions to scrutinise. The World Bank has identified corruption and weak institutions as important factors contributing to fragility and violence, particularly where citizens perceive public institutions as ineffective or exclusionary.⁵

2.3 Corruption as an Enabler of Terrorism and Insecurity

Corruption can enable terrorism by creating weaknesses in the systems designed to prevent, detect and prosecute terrorist activities. At the border, for example, bribery and abuse of official authority may undermine immigration, customs and other forms of regulatory control. Within the financial system, corrupt practices can facilitate concealment or movement of illicit proceeds, particularly where institutions responsible for financial monitoring lack adequate capacity or integrity. Similarly, corruption within law-enforcement institutions may compromise investigations by permitting evidence to be suppressed, suspects to evade lawful processes or confidential information to be disclosed.

The financing dimension is particularly significant. Effective counterterrorism requires the capacity to identify, trace, freeze and ultimately confiscate funds connected with terrorism. The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) has consistently identified effective financial intelligence, asset tracing and inter-agency cooperation as essential components of systems designed to combat

⁶ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), The Nexus between Organized Crime and Terrorism (United Nations).

https://www.google.com/goto?url=CAESTgHrOzAVuFTMzJHmPMGpcjuIRIUEPWWWWxjPAIak--R4D1f9BlugXkerrO_hR08E9Hw7hpO1jO7nJYw83iDwb_Ebgc7LcYaX79HGtFj8zQ

terrorist financing.⁷ Where corruption compromises these mechanisms, terrorist organisations may obtain greater opportunity to exploit formal and informal financial channels.

Corruption may also contribute indirectly to the growth of insecurity by weakening public confidence in government institutions. Where communities perceive security, justice or public administrative institutions as corrupt or inaccessible, cooperation with those institutions may decline. This can affect intelligence gathering and community-based approaches to preventing terrorism. The relationship should not, however, be understood to mean that corruption automatically produces terrorism. Terrorism has multiple political, ideological, social, economic and security-related causes. Rather, corruption can create an enabling environment in which terrorist organisations are better positioned to exploit existing grievances and institutional weaknesses.

2.4 Impact of Corruption on Security Institutions, Defence Resources and Counterterrorism Efforts

The consequences of corruption are particularly serious when it affects defence and security institutions because the loss is not confined to public finances, it may directly affect operational capability. Defence procurement, maintenance, logistics, infrastructure, personnel welfare and training require substantial and sustained public expenditure. When resources allocated for these purposes are misappropriated or procurement decisions are distorted by private interests, the armed forces may receive fewer or lower-quality resources than those authorised or budgeted for.

The defence sector presents a distinctive accountability challenge because national-security considerations may legitimately restrict the disclosure of certain information. Such restrictions, however, do not eliminate the need for lawful financial and administrative oversight. The OECD has observed that defence and security procurement is particularly exposed to corruption risks because of the substantial value of contracts, technical complexity, urgency of acquisition and restrictions on transparency that may accompany sensitive procurements.⁸ Effective oversight must therefore reconcile legitimate

⁷ Financial Action Task Force (FATF). (2023). International Standards on Combating Money Laundering and the Financing of Terrorism & Proliferation: The FATF Recommendations (Updated November 2023). FATF.

<https://www.fatf-gafi.org>

⁸ Preventing Corruption in Public Procurement

https://www.google.com/goto?url=CAESxQEB6zswFaPBisq0m0YUiMpsyAFLOxTUIN1uuJW5OqKHFakRwYHU8T0DJxytzLfHxD7zl4eiWO_Us3MLUE_QrQ0BBUZpkJqnFyYucZJ8b43L8hXUPyleTeOrOKuDFRFxI5jVXW-

confidentiality requirements with mechanisms capable of detecting fraud, conflicts of interest, inflated contracts and other forms of procurement abuse.

Corruption can further weaken counterterrorism operations by affecting personnel deployment, intelligence management, logistics and inter-agency cooperation. A security operation depends upon a chain of institutional functions: intelligence must be collected and assessed; personnel and equipment must be available; operational information must be protected; and investigations must ultimately support lawful prosecution. Failure at any point can reduce the effectiveness of the overall response. The United Nations Security Council has repeatedly emphasised the importance of strengthening national institutions and international cooperation in preventing and combating terrorism, including through measures addressing terrorist financing and the capacity of competent authorities.⁸

2.5 Consequences for National Security and Economic Stability

The combined effects of corruption, terrorism and armed conflict extend beyond immediate security concerns to the wider stability of the Nigerian State. Terrorist violence and prolonged conflict can destroy productive assets, disrupt agricultural and commercial activities, displace populations and discourage private investment. The resulting reduction in economic activity can diminish government revenue while simultaneously increasing expenditure on security, humanitarian assistance and reconstruction.

The security consequences are equally significant. Where corruption weakens defence and law-enforcement institutions, the State may face greater difficulty maintaining territorial security, protecting civilians and restoring normal governmental authority in affected areas. Prolonged insecurity can consequently undermine public confidence, interrupt the delivery of essential services and weaken the institutional conditions necessary for sustainable development. This is consistent with Sustainable Development Goal 16, which links sustainable development with peaceful societies, access to justice and effective, accountable and inclusive institutions.⁹

[oTdAF_35ns8cx6grpONC6VRgDohC1lp-Ef2MTG43Avo5v0DHmzL7LQJ3T19s-NXx6krqWRAOAKfhUe8HDIJ2OiOyfs4HF5-Xmhx4fbFZVTaWjHxkDm4jtfPrF_GxGaRCyCA](#)

⁹ Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 25 September 2015, A/RES/70/1)

Accordingly, the Nigerian experience demonstrates that corruption, terrorism and armed conflict should not be treated as isolated legal problems. They constitute interconnected governance, security and development challenges.

3.0. LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORKS FOR COMBATING CORRUPTION AND TERRORISM IN NIGERIA

Nigeria's response to corruption and terrorism is founded on a combination of constitutional principles, domestic legislation, specialised Institutions and international obligations.

3.1 Constitutional and Statutory Frameworks for Combating Corruption and Terrorism.

The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) provides the foundational basis for promoting good governance, security and accountability. Section 15(5) expressly requires the State to abolish corrupt practices and abuse of power, while the broader constitutional objectives concerning national security, economic welfare and social justice provide the normative basis for legislative and institutional measures against corruption and insecurity.

These constitutional objectives are reinforced by specific legislation. The **Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Act 2000**, establishes the principal statutory framework for preventing and prosecuting corrupt practices, while the **Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (Establishment) Act 2004** provides the legal foundation for investigating and prosecuting economic and financial crimes. For terrorism, **the Terrorism (Prevention and Prohibition) Act 2022** provides the principal legislative framework for criminalising terrorist acts, terrorist financing and related conduct.

3.2 Anti-Corruption, Anti-Money Laundering and Terrorist-Financing Legislation

The legal response increasingly recognises the financial dimension of both corruption and terrorism. **The Money Laundering (Prevention and Prohibition) Act 2022** establishes obligations aimed at preventing the concealment and movement of illicit proceeds, while **the Proceeds of Crime (Recovery and Management) Act 2022** provides mechanisms for the seizure, forfeiture and management of proceeds of crime. **The Nigerian Financial Intelligence Unit Act**

2018 further establishes the NFIU as the central National agency for receiving, analysing and disseminating financial intelligence to competent authorities.

The Terrorism (Prevention and Prohibition) Act 2022 complements these measures by imposing obligations on financial and designated non-financial institutions concerning suspicious transactions and terrorist financing. The Act provides for the reporting of suspicious transactions to the NFIU and mechanisms for freezing and forfeiting assets connected with terrorism. Thus, the financial regulatory framework is significant because disrupting the economic resources of criminal and terrorist networks can complement conventional investigation and security operations.

3.3 Legal Frameworks Governing Military Operations and Conflict Management

Section **217-220** of the 1999 Constitution (as Amended), the **Armed Forces Act**, The **Geneva Conventions Act** and the **Public Procurement Act 2007** are relevant here. The legal regulation of military operations operates within the constitutional framework governing national defence and security and the statutory framework regulating the Armed Forces. Military responses to terrorism and armed conflict must also be exercised consistently with applicable criminal law, constitutional rights and international humanitarian law. This is particularly important where military forces are deployed in internal security operations, since operational effectiveness must be balanced with legality, civilian protection and accountability.

The legal framework therefore has a dual function, it provides the authority necessary for the State to respond to threats to national security while establishing limitations on the exercise of coercive powers. Effective conflict management consequently requires not only adequate operational capacity but also mechanisms for investigating misconduct, addressing violations and ensuring that security operations remain subject to the rule of law.

3.4 Roles of Enforcement, Security, Financial Intelligence and Prosecutorial Institutions

The implementation of these laws is distributed among several Institutions with complementary responsibilities. The EFCC and ICPC constitute key pillars of Nigeria's anti-corruption architecture, while the NFIU performs a specialised financial-intelligence function by analysing financial disclosures and disseminating relevant intelligence to competent authorities

Counterterrorism additionally involves the armed forces, police, intelligence and other security agencies, together with prosecutorial Authorities and the Courts. Their effectiveness depends upon a functional chain extending from intelligence gathering and financial investigation through investigation, prosecution, adjudication and asset recovery. Consequently, institutional effectiveness cannot be measured solely by the existence of statutory powers; it also depends on whether institutions possess the capacity and independence necessary to exercise those powers lawfully and efficiently.

3.5 International and Regional Legal Obligations

Nigeria's domestic anti-corruption and security framework operates within broader international and regional obligations. To align with global standards, Nigeria signed the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) in 2000 and ratified it on June 28, 2001. This was followed by the ratification of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) on December 14, 2004 . Additionally, Nigeria signed the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism in November 21, 2001, and formally ratified it on October 4, 2005, which was subsequently integrated into domestic law. Regionally, Nigeria solidified its commitment to continental integrity by signing the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption (AUCPCC) in December 2003 and formally ratifying it on September 26, 2006¹⁰

These instruments promote cooperation in areas including corruption prevention, criminalisation, asset recovery, information sharing, mutual legal assistance and combating terrorist financing. However, UNCAC has not been domesticated as a single comprehensive statute in Nigeria. Instead, several domestic laws and institutions implement different aspects of its obligations..

3.6 Inter-Agency Coordination, Accountability and Enforcement Mechanisms

Given the interconnected nature of corruption, terrorism and illicit financial activities, effective enforcement requires substantial coordination between anti-corruption bodies, financial-intelligence institutions, law-enforcement agencies, intelligence services, the military, prosecutors and the judiciary. Financial intelligence, for example, becomes most useful when it can be translated into timely investigations, prosecutions and asset-recovery

¹⁰ United Nations Treaty Collection (UNTC) Organised Crime
<https://treaties.un.org/Pages/showDetails.aspx?objid=0800000280050d3e&clang=en>

proceedings. Similarly, counterterrorism operations require coordination between intelligence gathering, financial investigation and conventional security operations.

The principal challenge, therefore, is not necessarily the absence of legislation but the **effective integration and enforcement of existing legal powers**. Nigeria's UNCAC implementation reviews have identified areas requiring continued improvement in the legal, institutional and operational anti-corruption framework. Strengthening inter-agency information sharing, institutional accountability, prosecutorial capacity and judicial effectiveness is consequently essential to converting Nigeria's substantial body of legislation into practical results. This provides the basis for the subsequent examination of the gaps that affect the effectiveness of these frameworks in combating corruption, terrorism and armed conflict¹¹.

4.0 IMPACT OF ARMED CONFLICT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND MILITARY RESILIENCE

Armed conflict has consequences that extend beyond immediate loss of life and physical insecurity. In conflict-affected societies, violence can weaken the systems through which governments provide essential services, generate economic activity and maintain institutional capacity. In Nigeria, prolonged insecurity in parts of the country has therefore created a significant development challenge, particularly where insecurity coincides with pre-existing infrastructure and governance constraints.

4.1 Effects on Infrastructure and Public Services

Prolonged armed conflict can damage or render inaccessible schools, hospitals, roads, electricity facilities, water systems and other public infrastructure. Even where infrastructure is not physically destroyed, insecurity may prevent government personnel and service providers from operating effectively in affected communities. This creates a secondary development cost because resources that would ordinarily support expansion and maintenance of public services may have to be redirected towards emergency response, security and reconstruction.

¹¹Strategic Dialogue on Nigeria's Implementation of the 2014 and 2019 UNCAC Review Recommendations <https://www.unodc.org/conig/en/stories/strategic-dialogue-on-nigerias-implementation-of-the-2014-and-2019-uncac-review-recommendations.html>

The Nigerian experience illustrates this interaction between insecurity and service delivery. Conflict in the North-East has contributed to weakened health systems and restricted access to healthcare, requiring targeted interventions to restore basic services. Thus, conflict undermines sustainable development not only through physical destruction but also through the interruption of ordinary governmental functions¹².

4.2 Disruption of Education, Healthcare and Human Capital Development

Education and healthcare are particularly vulnerable to prolonged insecurity because they depend on functioning institutions, safe access and the continuous presence of qualified personnel. Conflict may lead to school closures, interruption of teaching, displacement of teachers and students (for instance the Oyo Kidnapping), and reduced access to healthcare facilities. These disruptions have long-term consequences because the loss of educational opportunities and healthcare can reduce the quality of human capital available to the economy.

The World Bank considers human capital, comprising health, knowledge, skills and experience, a fundamental foundation for sustainable economic growth. Its assessment of Nigeria's education and primary healthcare sectors further identifies effective financing, governance and service delivery as important determinants of human-capital outcomes. Conflict therefore compounds existing human-development challenges by reducing the ability of institutions to deliver these essential services consistently¹³.

4.3 Effects on Economic Productivity, Investment and Public Finances

Armed conflict disrupts economic productivity by restricting movement, damaging productive assets, interrupting agricultural and commercial activities and increasing uncertainty for businesses. Investors may defer or relocate investments where insecurity raises operating costs and threatens personnel, infrastructure or supply chains. The consequence can be lower employment and weaker local economic activity.

Conflict also creates pressure on public finances. Governments must simultaneously finance security operations, humanitarian assistance and

¹² Health-seeking in fragile and conflict-affected settings: how armed violent conflict shapes maternal and child health-seeking behaviours <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC13091252/>

¹³Publication: Human Capital Public Expenditure and Institutional Review - An analysis of financing and governance constraints for the delivery of basic education and primary health care in Nigeria <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/entities/publication/fddd889b-1172-4f4a-89c5-8885d9e08477>

reconstruction while maintaining education, healthcare and other development expenditure. In economies with limited fiscal space, this can create difficult expenditure trade-offs. The World Bank notes more generally that fragile and conflict-affected economies face constrained fiscal capacity for investment in infrastructure, education and health, while high-intensity conflict is associated with substantial subsequent reductions in GDP per capita. For Nigeria, maintaining fiscal capacity for productive and social expenditure is therefore closely connected to the restoration of security and economic confidence.¹⁴

4.4 Displacement, Livelihood Disruption and Humanitarian Consequences

Conflict-induced displacement represents another major obstacle to sustainable development. Internally displaced persons may lose access to land, employment, housing, education and healthcare, while host communities may experience additional pressure on limited resources. Displacement consequently transforms a security problem into a broader social and economic challenge.

Evidence from the World Bank shows that conflict and insecurity are major drivers of displacement in Nigeria and that internally displaced populations face significant vulnerabilities relating to poverty, food insecurity, housing and employment. Sustainable recovery therefore requires more than the cessation of violence; it requires policies capable of restoring livelihoods, facilitating safe return or local integration, rebuilding essential services and addressing the economic conditions that sustain vulnerability.¹⁵

4.5 Impact on Military Readiness, Procurement, Logistics and Institutional Resilience

Sustained operations place considerable demands on personnel, equipment, logistics, intelligence systems and defence budgets. Military resilience consequently depends upon the ability to maintain equipment, replenish supplies, train personnel and adapt operational capabilities over an extended period.

Integrity in defence procurement is especially significant. Defence procurement involves complex technologies, substantial expenditure and legitimate security

¹⁴ Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations: Intertwined Crises, Multiple Vulnerabilities

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/research/publication/fragile-and-conflict-affected-situations-vulnerabilities>

¹⁵ Informing Durable Solutions for Internal Displacement

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/poverty/publication/informing-durable-solutions-for-internal-displacement>

requirements that may restrict the degree of public disclosure. It has been observed that reduced transparency and extensive discretion in defence procurement can create opportunities for corruption and inefficient use of public resources. Where procurement weaknesses result in delayed delivery, defective equipment, inflated costs or inadequate maintenance, the consequences may extend directly to operational readiness.¹⁶

Military resilience should therefore be understood institutionally rather than simply in terms of the quantity of military assets available. It requires sound procurement systems, reliable logistics, effective personnel management, institutional accountability and the capacity to sustain operations without undermining the broader fiscal and administrative capacity of the State.

4.6 Relationship between Security, Economic Stability and Sustainable Development

The relationship between security and sustainable development is therefore reciprocal. Insecurity can undermine investment, infrastructure, human capital and public finances, while persistent developmental deficits may reduce the capacity of affected Communities and Institutions to withstand further shocks. Security policy should consequently not be separated from development policy.

For Nigeria, this requires a broader conception of national resilience in which military and security interventions are accompanied by the restoration of public services, economic opportunities, infrastructure and human capital. The World Bank's recent Nigeria programmes similarly emphasise that investment in education, healthcare, infrastructure, revenue mobilisation and economic stability is central to improving long-term development outcomes. Accordingly, sustainable development should form part of the broader conflict-management strategy rather than being treated solely as a post-conflict objective.¹⁷

5.0. STRENGTHENING NIGERIA'S LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR SECURITY, RESILIENCE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Although Nigeria has developed a substantial body of legislation and established specialised institutions to address corruption, terrorist financing and insecurity, the principal challenge lies in translating formal legal powers into consistent and coordinated enforcement. The appropriate reform question is therefore not

¹⁶ <https://www.google.com/goto?url=CAESTwHrOzAVeQZeYVYkTsbUTHBv2kPpOZQiySvEvCzUCwTKU4oqJp-1GhH5NkSQEtOyP6l12IW-snOfRUljermm4FzxyahfP0AH9XfPEv6SYok>

¹⁷ <https://www.worldbank.org/ext/en/country/nigeria>

simply whether Nigeria requires additional laws, but how existing laws and Institutions can be made more coherent, effective and accountable.

5.1 Assessment of the Effectiveness of Existing Legal and Institutional Frameworks

The effectiveness of Nigeria's framework should be assessed by examining the extent to which legislation produces practical outcomes in investigation, prosecution, conviction, asset recovery and prevention. The existence of statutory powers is insufficient where institutional capacity, investigative expertise or enforcement mechanisms are inadequate.

5.2 The development of stronger mechanisms for accountability and institutional coordination

Corruption and terrorism frequently involve activities that cross institutional and jurisdictional boundaries; consequently, isolated investigations by individual agencies may leave important financial, intelligence or evidentiary connections unidentified. The GIABA/FATF assessment of Nigeria specifically examined the country's coordination and policy-setting arrangements and identified areas requiring further strengthening.¹⁸

Nigeria would therefore benefit from clearer protocols for the timely exchange of intelligence among financial-intelligence, law-enforcement, security and prosecutorial bodies. Inter-agency cooperation should be supported by interoperable databases, defined institutional responsibilities and mechanisms for resolving jurisdictional conflicts. Accountability should similarly extend beyond disciplinary sanctions to include systematic monitoring of institutional performance and independent review of enforcement outcomes.

5.3 Strengthening Prosecution, Asset Recovery and Financial Intelligence

The effectiveness of anti-corruption and counterterrorism measures ultimately depends substantially on the ability to convert intelligence into admissible evidence and enforceable judicial outcomes. Greater emphasis should therefore be placed on specialised financial investigations, digital evidence, beneficial-ownership information, forensic accounting and cross-border financial cooperation. Asset recovery should also be treated as a central component of enforcement because removing the economic benefits of corruption and

¹⁸ <https://www.fatf-gafi.org/content/dam/fatf-gafi/fsrb-fur/Nigeria-GIABA-Follow-Up-Report-ENG-2024.pdf>

terrorism can weaken the underlying financial incentives supporting these activities.

Nigeria has made progress in strengthening its AML/CFT framework. In late 2024, the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and the Inter-Governmental Action Group against Money Laundering in West Africa (GIABA) recognized that Nigeria significantly improved its technical compliance, reaching Compliant or Largely Compliant status in 37 out of 40 FATF recommendations. This momentum ultimately contributed to Nigeria successfully exiting the FATF "Grey List" in late 2025. However, the assessment indicates that continued institutional development remains necessary. Strengthening the operational relationship between the Nigeria Financial Intelligence Unit, investigative agencies, prosecutors and the courts would help ensure that financial intelligence is converted into investigations, prosecutions and recovery proceedings rather than remaining merely informational.

5.4 Enhancing Transparency and Accountability in Defence and Security Expenditure

Nigeria should strengthen internal and external controls over defence procurement without compromising genuinely sensitive operational information. This may include improved procurement planning, conflict-of-interest controls, independent auditing, supplier due diligence, contract-performance monitoring and appropriate post-contract review. Transparency should be calibrated so that legitimate classified information remains protected while financial decisions and procurement processes remain sufficiently accountable to authorised oversight institutions.¹⁹

5.5 Integrating Anti-Corruption and Counterterrorism Strategies

Anti-corruption and counterterrorism policies should be treated as complementary rather than separate areas of governance. Corruption risks within border management, procurement, financial systems and law enforcement can affect the ability of the State to identify and disrupt terrorist networks. An integrated strategy should consequently incorporate corruption-risk assessments into counterterrorism planning and, conversely, incorporate terrorist-financing risks into anti-corruption and financial-crime investigations.

¹⁹ <https://ti-defence.org/gdi/countries/nigeria/?risk=procurement>

This integrated approach should be supported by joint risk assessments, shared intelligence mechanisms, coordinated investigations and common training for relevant personnel. It would also allow agencies to identify connections between corruption proceeds, organised criminal activity and terrorist financing more effectively.

5.6 Aligning Security and Military Frameworks with Sustainable-Development Objectives

Security policy should also be connected expressly to development planning. The objective should not merely be to suppress immediate threats but to create conditions in which infrastructure, education, healthcare, investment and productive activity can recover and develop. Consequently, security-sector planning should incorporate the protection of critical infrastructure, civilian livelihoods, public services and economic activity within conflict-affected areas.

This approach is consistent with the broader principle that public governance should use security and development policies in a mutually reinforcing manner. Effective public procurement, for example, contributes not only to security capability but also to the efficient use of public resources and delivery of public services.

5.7 Strengthening Institutional and Military Resilience through Legal and Governance Reforms

Ultimately, resilience requires Institutions capable of maintaining their functions under prolonged pressure while adapting to emerging threats. Legal reform should therefore be accompanied by institutional reforms that strengthen professional capacity, internal controls, oversight, digital systems and evidence-based decision-making. Within the military and wider security sector, resilience should encompass sustainable logistics, effective procurement management, personnel development, maintenance systems and institutional accountability.

The objective should be to establish institutions that are not only capable of responding to terrorism and armed conflict but are also sufficiently accountable to prevent the misuse of the resources entrusted to them. In this regard, resilience is both a **security objective** and a **governance objective**. Strengthening Institutional integrity reduces vulnerabilities that can be exploited by terrorist and criminal networks, while efficient management of public resources preserves the fiscal capacity required for long-term security and development.

6.0. CONCLUSION

The relationship between corruption, terrorism and armed conflict demonstrates that Nigeria's security challenges cannot be addressed effectively through isolated legal or institutional responses. These phenomena interact in ways that place simultaneous pressure on governance, public finances, security institutions and the foundations of sustainable development. The analysis has shown that the existence of extensive legislation and specialised institutions provides an important foundation for addressing these challenges, but the practical value of the framework ultimately depends on the quality of implementation, institutional integrity and effective coordination.

A sustainable response therefore requires a shift from fragmented interventions towards an integrated security-governance framework. Anti-corruption measures should complement counterterrorism efforts, particularly in areas involving public expenditure, financial intelligence, procurement and asset recovery.

More fundamentally, security should be understood as a condition for, rather than an alternative to, sustainable development. Prolonged conflict can reverse developmental gains, weaken human capital, constrain economic activity and place persistent pressure on public finances. Accordingly, Nigeria's approach to conflict management should incorporate recovery of affected communities, protection of essential infrastructure, restoration of livelihoods and strengthening of public institutions alongside legitimate security objectives. Military resilience should similarly encompass not only operational capability but also sound governance, sustainable logistics, accountable procurement and institutional adaptability.

Ultimately, strengthening Nigeria's response to corruption, terrorism and armed conflict requires **law, Institutions and development policy to operate as mutually reinforcing components of national resilience**. The priority should therefore be to improve the enforcement of existing laws, close identified institutional gaps, strengthen inter-agency cooperation and ensure that security resources are managed with integrity and accountability. Such an integrated approach offers a more sustainable basis for protecting national security, preserving economic stability and creating institutional conditions in which Nigeria can withstand present and emerging threats while continuing to pursue its long-term development objectives.