



Research Paper

The Insurgency Waiver and the Geopolitics of Impunity: Nigeria's Crisis in Global Perspective

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Abstract

The study aims to present an original framework to understand selective government leniency towards insurgents in Nigeria: the insurgency waiver. The insurgency waiver is defined as a structural condition in which insurgents and violent actors in Nigeria are afforded, implicitly or explicitly, governmental forgiveness or forbearance, that mitigates or obviates punitive repercussions of mass violence, resulting in a state of affairs that makes insurgency "pay." In contrast, other crimes, even of similar character (kidnapping, mass murder, abduction of women and children) are punished more directly or severely. The study contextualizes this "insurgency waiver" within the frame of Nigeria's designation by the United States as a Country of Particular Concern (CPC) for religious-freedom violations, the intensifying threat of Boko Haram and associated groups' insurgency, humanitarian crisis, and lack of accountability mechanisms. It reviews defense budgets, reintegration policies, number of victims, and budget and security-spending figures as well as Chibok schoolgirls kidnapping and Plateau massacres, to demonstrate that the "insurgency waiver" is a form of social contract failure, an injustice to victims, and a driver of cycles of violence and impunity. The study applies qualitative case-study analysis of secondary data (2014–2025) drawn from trackers and reports by highly credible organizations documenting the relevant events, government decisions, and legal and policy frameworks related to the "insurgency waiver" phenomenon. The study finds that this preferential forbearance or leniency towards insurgents, as opposed to impunity for their crimes against civilians, represents a perverse incentive structure in which "insurgency pays." The study also discusses the challenges of policy reforms, drawing on peer-reviewed analyses of reintegration programs and recent international attention, including Trump's 2025 threat of military intervention over Christian persecution, which many experts have highlighted raises uncomfortable questions about the fine line between genuine concern for religious freedom and geopolitical interests, while U.S. officials have publicly dismissed the accusations and questions of hidden agendas amid unfounded claims of Western complicity in fomenting regional unrest such as allegations of USAID funding and a U.S. military base in oil-rich Rivers State. The study proposes policy reforms that emphasize conditioned amnesty, victim-centered support, and spending transparency. The paper also employs Social Contract Theory as well as situates both the theory and the newly developed insurgency waiver construct in decolonial critiques of global security governance, and in doing so aims to contribute to the wider scholarship of conflict-governance.

Keywords

Insurgency waiver, Boko Haram, Impunity, Nigeria, Reintegration, Religious Freedom, Counterinsurgency, Social Contract Theory, Accountability, Security Spending, National Sovereignty.

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I. Introduction

Violent extremism in Nigeria over the past decade has revealed a pernicious inconsistency in the governance of security in the country. The long arm of the law tends to have a short reach when it comes to Boko Haram, such that mass atrocities committed by insurgents are more likely to be waived away than to be prosecuted. Nigeria was listed as a "Country of Particular Concern" (CPC) in the US Government's annual International Religious Freedom Report in 2025 (U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom [USCIRF], 2025). In response, former US President Donald Trump retweeted a call for military action in

Nigeria, with one follower writing: “The Islamic terrorist infidels killing all these innocent people in Nigeria deserve a harsh warning and to be eradicated quickly. It is long past time that the West stopped letting them do this” (Trump, 2025). The international condemnation for religious-freedom abuses and the hyperbolic language from detractors has made advocacy more complicated, at a time when honest expressions of global solidarity with the victims of Boko Haram’s violence are needed.

This paper explores the structural incentives that lead to this conflict between an international responsibility to protect Nigerian citizens from mass atrocities and the respect for Nigerian sovereignty that bars direct foreign military intervention. In short, Nigeria’s dual policy response to violent extremism has combined the use of force with “soft power” amnesty and rehabilitation programs for “repentant” Boko Haram members (International Crisis Group [ICG], 2021). On the one hand, the Nigerian military, with the support of local vigilante groups, has launched massive counter-insurgency operations to root out Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) cells in the northeast. Conversely, the security agencies have extended a “soft landing” to insurgents who surrender their weapons (Matfess, 2020). It has led to an inequitable system of justice whereby rehabilitation, cash stipends, and vocational training have been provided to insurgents but have not been provided to the civilian victims of insurgent attacks (Amnesty International, 2025a).

Operation Safe Corridor (OSC), for instance, is a multi-agency rehabilitation program designed to “assist in deradicalizing and reintegrating ‘repentant’ Boko Haram insurgents” (Adeoye et al., 2021, p. 1422). The counter-insurgency program has been funded by several sources over the years, including the European Union, USAID, and the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (Matfess, 2020; Amnesty International, 2025a). Interviews and photographic evidence, however, have emerged in recent years to suggest that OSC may not have taken root in places where Boko Haram victims live (Matfess, 2020). It is worth noting that Nigeria is not the only country to have conducted a major insurgency amnesty process in recent decades; the 2016 peace agreement between the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the Colombian government provides an instructive point of comparison (García-Godos, 2016; Rettberg, 2020). Unlike in Nigeria, however, transitional-justice institutions in Colombia, including the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP), were tasked with weighing each FARC combatant’s eligibility for amnesty and community reintegration against his or her individual crimes. A 2021 fact sheet from JEP detailed atrocity charges and individual reparations plans for each of the more than 7,000 FARC members it had processed up to that time (Special Jurisdicción para la Paz [JEP], 2021). In Nigeria, by contrast, programs such as OSC have functioned with very few judicial checks and balances and are at best only tangentially related to efforts to provide justice or to aid Boko Haram’s civilian victims.

In this article, I conceptualize this asymmetry in post-atrocity responses as the insurgency waiver: a structural condition by which insurgency actors, as opposed to other violent criminals, have their punishments mitigated or altogether waived through state-sanctioned processes of reintegration and rehabilitation. I do not suggest that Nigerian government officials are secretly sympathetic to the cause of extremism or that they deliberately condone terrorist violence; instead, I argue that by creating a systemic condition of impunity for insurgent crimes, the logic of rehabilitation and reintegration subverts the logic of deterrence, upending the social contract between the Nigerian state and its citizens. The article opens with a broad comparative sweep. I use the cases of amnesty in Colombia and in other conflict settings to highlight the relative exceptionality of Nigeria’s weaker legal protections for victims. The literature review situates the size of the insurgency and its impact on civilians in a discussion of the human cost of the conflict. The theoretical framework section first introduces and develops the insurgency waiver concept, then ties it to Social Contract Theory. It then briefly takes on decolonial approaches to security and sovereignty to set up what I refer to in the article as the “global frame” of this study. The methodology is a short summary of the types of data collection and analysis I performed in the course of this work. The discussion section moves to the analysis, working the concepts and theories through to Nigeria’s policy environment, and touching on illustrative examples in OSC, the Chibok case, the Plateau massacres, and issues of aid governance. The conclusion summarizes the analysis and offers some short thoughts on strategies to counter the logic of impunity.

II. Literature Review

A decade and a half after the Boko Haram insurgency erupted in 2009, it is among the longest and deadliest conflicts in Africa. While its consequences go well beyond terrorism and counterterrorism to include mass displacement, psychosocial trauma, economic stagnation, and institutional atrophy (Agbibo, 2018; Dunn et al., 2018; Kaiser et al., 2019), humanitarian agencies suggest that by the end of 2024 there were more than 3.3 million internally displaced Nigerians and over 8.4 million in need of humanitarian assistance across north-east Nigeria (International Organization for Migration [IOM], 2024; United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs [UNOCHA], 2024). The Council on Foreign Relations’ Nigeria Security Tracker (CFR NST) has recorded around 35,000 deaths since 2011, including civilians, military, and insurgents (CROST, 2023), and the World Bank (2023) estimates approximately \$9 billion in annual economic losses due to insecurity in the Lake Chad area. Yet despite the largescale defense expenditures (Transparency International

Defence & Security [TIDS], 2025), insecurity has not abated but grown and mutated from a single insurgency to multiple "hybrid threats," including banditry, farmer–herder conflict, communal killings, and more specifically targeted religious attacks (TIDS, 2025). The broad contours of this debate are evident in other settings where amnesties and peace deals have been deployed, for example, in the FARC process in Colombia or various post–civil war arrangements in Sierra Leone, but the Nigerian pattern of reintegration on a vast scale with little or no formal accountability is in many ways a particularly stark manifestation of the central phenomenon this article is terming the insurgency waiver (Skaar, García-Godos, & Collins, 2016).

Humanitarian and Victimization Dimensions

The insurgency has had deleterious effects on livelihoods, education, and public health. Dunn et al. (2018) showed that chronic insecurity in Borno and Yobe significantly exacerbated child undernutrition and absenteeism from school. Kaiser et al. (2019) observed high levels of depression and post-traumatic stress symptomology among displaced populations, with women and children being particularly affected. Recent assessments by UNIDIR (2024) show that women who are abducted by insurgents continue to face stigma, sexual violence, and inadequate psychosocial support even after they are rescued. Amnesty International (2025a) and Human Rights Watch (2025) reports found that the system was not tailored to the victims' needs: most victims of abduction, forced marriage, and displacement have received little to no long-term assistance. Absent comprehensive reparations frameworks is a critical gap that can contribute to social fragmentation and cycles of grievance (Olufadewa et al., 2024).

Religious-Freedom Violations and Selective Justice

Indeed, separate from the issue of insurgency alone, Nigeria's generalized culture of religious intolerance contributes to the dynamics of impunity as well. Citing Open Doors (2025), one of the world's most dangerous countries for Christians, Nigeria records several thousand Christian deaths annually as a result of faith-targeted violence. Amnesty International (2023) noted that the 2022 killing of a university student in Sokoto State at the hands of a mob over a blasphemy allegation remained unresolved, despite official promises of prosecution at the time.

Similar patterns emerged in the 2023 Plateau State massacres, which saw armed groups stage a series of raids in Christian-majority villages during December, killing over 140 people (Christian Solidarity International [CSI], 2024; Human Rights Watch, 2025). However, as of mid-2025, no major convictions had taken place in spite of official pledges (Amnesty International, 2025b). In this sense, the insurgency waiver has come to represent a much larger culture of selective impunity: not only Boko Haram attacks but many cases of mass or religious violence tend to see perpetrators go free while victims are denied restitution or justice.

International Controversies and Aid-Governance Contradictions

In addition, the counter-insurgency narrative has been complicated by recent controversies surrounding foreign aid and military collaboration. In 2025, the Nigerian parliament also opened an investigation into the work of the NGOs funded by USAID accused of diverting part of the money (Reuters, 2025). The report of the Office of Inspector General of USAID (2025) on this issue recognised the failure of oversight but did not provide any evidence that the agency deliberately transferred money to terrorist organisations. On the other hand, in this situation, other problems with the governance of humanitarian aid, not directly related to terrorist financing, were also revealed, which also influenced the accusations of double standards. In particular, the American government in its official statements emphasised its support for Nigerian-led efforts, as well as the complete absence of evidence of its deliberate support of the armed groups. This particular point was a cause of more active discussion, as can be judged by the degree of emotion and even political consequences of this topic.

Separately, the statements of Western politicians about the need to set up military bases in Nigeria's oil-bearing south also became a reason for public discussion about their neocolonialist ambitions (Le Monde, 2025). At that time, a formal request was not received, but the issue was hotly debated. On the one hand, this approach was criticized for perpetuating colonialist hierarchies in security management, while on the other hand, some argued it could offer a deterrent and rapid response capacity to local threats (Mbembe, 2001; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013). In both narratives, the framing of security cooperation is subject to historical and decolonial interpretations. Scholars caution that external pressures risk redefining Nigeria's security crisis through a paternalistic lens, thereby compromising domestic ownership of peacebuilding efforts (Campbell, 2018; Agbiboa, 2018).

Political Leadership, Impunity, and Elite Signaling

Nigeria's political elite have deepened the culture of the insurgency waiver by sending mixed signals. For example, in 2022, a 2023 vice-presidential aspirant removed an anti-Muslim-massacre post on X, following a "snowstorm" of threats from Islamists, arguing that it would not have created the job it got (Vanguard, 2022). Earlier, in 2023, a similar political figure had in his words, "increased tension" by "communalizing" the election.

This was due to how he "continuously put issues in such a way that it would promote disunity and incite disaffection against other religions" (Premium Times, 2023). In both examples, which are not intended to be personal, but are rather illustrative of the broader point, domestic elites have sent a signal that the society is more accepting of impunity towards those who act intolerantly, thus reducing the rule of law's capability as a credible deterrent.

It is perhaps due to this culture of acceptance of the insurgency waiver that Transparency International (2025) and BudgIT (2024) note elites have been generally "untouchable" when it comes to upholding consequences for security officials and service chiefs who indulge in security or financial crimes, or when it comes to tolerating when soldiers are reported or react to whistleblowing on procurement frauds. This has made violence a viable currency of political bargaining, rather than an enforceable criminal offense, and has thereby produced the culture of insurgency waiver.

In this vein, three central themes stand out:

- State weakness, insecurity, and corruption have made the Nigerian state's counter-insurgency efforts less effective (BudgIT, 2024; TIDS, 2025).
- Impunity, be it selective (massacres) or outright (blanket amnesty), has created a trust deficit with citizens, and has lowered the deterrence cost of future violence (Amnesty International, 2025b; Onuoha, 2020).
- Inconsistencies from within the West, in both aid oversight and politicized human rights advocacy, have undermined the global good-faith and complicated the conflict response (Reuters, 2025; USAID OIG, 2025).

The examination of themes validates this chapter's arguments regarding sufficient foundations for the study's introduction of the insurgency waiver and demonstrates how three key governance themes link through the rule of law, service delivery and security response within Nigeria. As we transition into the following section, the next phase will be to provide this construct with a more specific theoretical and operational definition.

III. Theoretical Framework

Conceptualizing the Insurgency Waiver

The insurgency waiver (author's concept) refers to a system of governance whereby insurgents or violent actors are afforded tacit or overt immunity by the state under the pretext of reconciliation, deradicalization, or peacebuilding, and where the resulting measures or benefits – such as reduced accountability, selective amnesty, or reintegration incentives – are not systematically afforded to other offenders who have committed similar crimes (Olojo, 2018; ICG, 2021).

While these kinds of programs are often framed in public as realistic and necessary strategies for conflict resolution, their operationalization in Nigeria has been experienced as asymmetrical justice – insurgents are provided platforms for reintegration, while victims are ignored or uncompensated. Such an uneven application of the justice system and law and order thereby communicates that violence, when utilized and performed under an insurgent or ideological identity, may be a way of life that can be negotiated with and profited from by the state (Agbibo, 2018; Matfess, 2020). By contrast, other amnesty mechanisms in different contexts have functioned in concert with other transitional justice elements, including special tribunals, truth commissions, and victim-participation provisions – for example, Colombia after the FARC paramilitaries' demobilization – and therefore do not always automatically lead to structural impunity (Theidon, 2007; García-Godos, 2016).

The result of the insurgency waiver, then, is a structural distortion of deterrence and the state's legitimacy. It changes the cost-benefit analysis of violent actors: rather than facing punishment and retribution, they can expect to be reintegrated, provided with economic or development support, or even be politically relevant again. In the long run, this kind of institutional pattern normalises impunity and therefore erodes trust in the justice system and the rule of law among the wider public (Onuoha, 2020; Amnesty International, 2025a).

The State, Justice, and the Social Contract

The social contract provides a context that has ethical or moral resonance. State authority over society and the relationship between the two in terms of reciprocal obligations is the concern of social contract. In this regard, Thomas Hobbes (1651) and John Locke (1689), among others, observed that the moral authority of the state over society is derived from the surrender of some individual liberties by society, for its protection, order, and justice, in the context of a social contract. A state in such a context maintains its authority only to the extent that it upholds the social contract between it and society. Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1762) later added that state sovereignty is based on the general will of the people and that a government that does not provide equality and justice for citizens is not upholding the moral foundation of the social contract.

In a similar vein, contemporary political philosophers like John Rawls (1971) posit that a just state is one whose political and social institutions treat citizens as moral equals in the face of rules of cooperation. In the

context of a state that only protects some people at the expense of others or enforces certain laws for a segment of society, the moral basis for justice is no longer fair and equal treatment and in such circumstances, citizens are not only justified in withdrawing their allegiance to such a government but also in taking alternative measures to ensure their protection including self-help (vigilantism), extra-judicial protection, and insurrection.

In the Nigerian context, this theoretical framework points to a major moral and institutional contradiction and one that feeds the insurgency waiver issue. When the government protects insurgents and victims simultaneously, it effectively withdraws protection from the innocent and provides protection for the violent and rewards rather than punishes this behavior – a distortion of the moral economy of the social contract. Citizens that observe this phenomenon and see former insurgents receiving government stipends, housing, or jobs after committing mass atrocities and violence against their fellow citizens are likely to conclude that being obedient and civil is punished while being violent is rewarded (TIDS, 2025; Amnesty International, 2025b), creating a level of alienation from state authority.

IV. Mechanisms of the Insurgency Waiver

Breaking Down the Empirical Working of the Insurgency Waiver

1. Amnesty without Accountability

Amnesty initiatives such as Operation Safe Corridor (OSC) are often couched in reconciliatory terms, yet they are often conducted with little vetting and no prosecution for serious crimes (ICG, 2021; Olojo, 2018). While deradicalization can be a necessary step toward stability, its execution in Nigeria has permitted individuals with alleged involvement in mass atrocities to reintegrate into civilian life with no justice for victims, in clear violation of the state's responsibility to protect and vindicate its citizens.

2. Fast-Track Justice for the Ordinary Citizen

On the flip side, citizens accused of minor or even unrelated crimes face expedited and severe legal penalties. This creates an institutionalized system of double standards in the administration of justice, where violence is measured by its political and ideological worth (Onuoha, 2020; Amnesty International, 2023). The unwillingness of the political class to denounce sectarian violence and human rights violations is at best tacit complicity, and at worst an indication of political expediency. This, in turn, further fuels the narrative that some lives and some crimes are more expendable than others.

3. Negotiation through Violence

The cyclical pattern of offering amnesty and reintegrating incentives has turned violence into a viable negotiation tool. Insurgent groups realize that surrendering in exchange for amnesty and benefits rather than prosecution is the way to reintegrate into society, which can embolden other groups to adopt similar strategies (Matfess, 2020). The threat and actuality of violence as a form of communication replace the state's role in the social contract as a coercive power that enforces deterrence.

4. Governance by Exception

The resilience of the waiver itself is an indication of the Nigerian state's diminished ability to enforce a consistent rule of law. Corruption, politicization of the judiciary, and a militarized approach to governance hollow out the institutions of justice, resulting in what has been described as a "governance by exception," in which the laws do not apply equally to everyone (BudgIT, 2024; TIDS, 2025). Faced with this double standard, the average citizen loses trust in the institutions of justice and, in turn, either withdraws from civic duties or engages in vigilantism or retaliatory violence.

5. Connecting the Social Contract and the Insurgency Waiver

The inherent link between the social contract and the insurgency waiver lays bare the fundamental irony at the heart of statecraft in Nigeria: that the moral authority of the state is diminished in the very act of doing what is necessary to shore it up. Each amnesty offered in the absence of justice further alienates citizens from their state. As Hobbes said, where protection is lacking, man reverts to the "war of all against all" and in contemporary Nigeria, this is no longer a philosophical proposition but one manifest in the literal atomization of the monopoly on authority by the state to militias, vigilante groups and insurgent armies. The insurgency waiver is both the logical extension of a weak state and the feedback loop which reproduces the state's fragility; it is both the institutionalization of a bias towards cheap forms of peace and the repackaging of the very conditions which give rise to insurgency in the first place. The impunity, marginalization and corrosive distrust of citizens that impunity breeds. The protection on offer from the state thereby transforms its citizens from social actors to passive spectators in a security trade-off.

Toward a Theoretical Synthesis

Factoring the praxis of Nigerian counter-insurgency policy with the insurgency waiver as considered above with a dose of Social Contract Theory, one can restyle the insurgency waiver as the rupture of the social contract between Nigerian state and its citizenry in our time. It also helps to explain why Nigeria's insecurity persists in spite of its high military spending: because security is a matter of legitimacy, not money. The state can only restore its moral authority and the confidence of the citizenry by reinstating a just and impartial system

of justice and fair protection. Alternatively, from a decolonial optic, one can situate Nigeria's insecurity in a wider global order of security provision where African states can never match the expectations of external (read: colonial) powers steeped in power imbalances and a racist modernity (Fanon, 1963; Mbembe, 2001). From this perspective, the insurgency waiver represents not just a domestic governance shortcoming, but also an exemplar of broader global patterns in which certain lives and regions are more "permissible to be left in disorder" than others.

V. Methodology

Research Design and Rationale

The research takes a qualitative, theory-building case-study approach to conceptualize and analyze the insurgency waiver in Nigeria (Gerring, 2007; George & Bennett, 2005; Yin, 2018). The choice of a single-country, multi-episode case study is due to the phenomena being complex, institutional and path-dependent, hence more amenable to process-sensitive understanding rather than cross-sectional variation. The design features documentary analysis of authoritative secondary materials (government budgets, human-rights reports, security trackers, scholarly literature), coupled with systematic appraisal and triangulation of evidence, to enhance internal validity (Bowen, 2009; Denzin, 1978).

The theoretical contribution is concept-formation and mechanism tracing: we conceptualize the insurgency waiver and trace the mechanisms that reproduce it (conditional amnesty without accountability; selective justice; normalization of violence as bargaining; erosion of state capacity). We draw on Social Contract Theory to assess how these mechanisms jointly break the state–citizen covenant – thereby sharpening the normative stakes of the empirical patterns we observe (Hobbes, 1651/2012; Locke, 1689/1988; Rawls, 1971; Rousseau, 1762/2011).

Scope, Periodization, and Units of Analysis

TIME PERIOD: 2014–2025. The period covered includes: (a) the 2014 mass kidnappings in Chibok; (b) the period of maturity for Operation Safe Corridor (launched in 2016); (c) the projection of budgets through 2024; and (d) mass atrocity incidents in 2023–2025 (e.g., Plateau State). 2025 data on fatalities and displacement are reliant on early reporting, and are therefore approximative in nature. **AREAS COVERED:** Federal Republic of Nigeria, sub-nationally with focus on the North-East (Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa states) and the North-Central/Middle Belt (Plateau, Benue, and Kaduna states) where sectarian and communal violence have the most significant overlap with insurgency issues. **ANALYSIS UNITS:** (1) Policies/programs (e.g., amnesty/DDR—OSC); (2) mass violence incidents (terror attacks, communal/religious massacres); (3) budget and procurement trends; and (4) victim outcomes (displacement, survivor care, access to justice).

Data Sources and Evidence Hierarchy

We use the following hierarchy of evidence, weighted toward primary and methodologically transparent sources:

- **Official/Administrative Data:** Federal budget releases and third-party budget evaluations (Budget Office of the Federation; BudgIT, 2024); national-level statistics on displacement (NBS; as available).
- **International Organizations & Trackers:** IOM/DTM displacement atlases and situation reports; CFR Nigeria Security Tracker (NST) for conflict-related deaths and event coding; UNIDIR and UNOCHA thematic briefs (CFR, 2025; IOM, 2024; UNIDIR, 2024; UNOCHA, 2024).
- **Peer-Reviewed and Think-Tank Scholarship:** Journal articles and books on Boko Haram, DDR, and state capacity (Agbiboa, 2018; Matfess, 2020; Onuoha, 2020; ICG, 2021).
- **Human-Rights Documentation:** Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch research on extrajudicial killings, kidnappings, detentions, survivor care, and due process (Amnesty International, 2023, 2025a, 2025b; HRW, 2025).
- **Major Wire/International Media for Event Corroboration:** Reuters and Le Monde for breaking news and policy announcements in the absence of primary documents (Le Monde, 2025; Reuters, 2025). Where 2025-specific data or attributions remain disputed—such as over alleged humanitarian aid diversion or repurposing of military bases—the analysis is transparent in noting official pushback or alternative framings of the same incident by the government.
- **Social media posts, blogs, and crowd-sourced platforms** (e.g., Wikipedia) are not evidentiary bases; at best, they serve as leads to track primary reporting and are excluded from analysis absent independent corroboration from sources (1)–(4). References to domestic political figures are anonymized (e.g., a high-profile opposition politician), as per your request, and are used only to exemplify elite signaling dynamics when verified by trustworthy outlets (e.g., Premium Times, 2023; Vanguard, 2022).

Operationalization of Key Constructs

- Insurgency waiver (dependent construct): Existence of state-sanctioned leniency measures toward insurgents (amnesty, stipends, reintegration) in conjunction with partial or non-existent accountability for serious crimes (mass killings, abduction, sexual violence). Evidence is content-analyzed from program documents (OSC), human-rights reporting, and judicial outcomes (ICG, 2021; Amnesty International, 2025a).
- Selective justice (mechanism): Examples in which similar crimes face divergent legal treatment based on whether perpetrators are insurgents vs. non-insurgents (Onuoha, 2020; Amnesty International, 2023).
- Victim outcomes (criterion validity for waiver): Metrics include IDP volumes (IOM), documented cases of survivor assistance gaps (Amnesty International; UNIDIR), and lack of convictions for large-scale attacks (HRW, 2025; Amnesty International, 2025b).
- Security effort (context): Budget size and allocation (defense, police, internal security) from BudgIT and official budget tables. We differentiate approved vs. revised/actual where available (BudgIT, 2024).
- Religious-freedom pressure (context): USCIRF CPC designation and related recommendations (USCIRF, 2025).

Analytic Strategy

- The analysis follows a directed qualitative content analysis approach that uses predetermined codes which stem from an existing theoretical framework.
- Codes: amnesty/DDR design; accountability/prosecution; survivor support; budget–outcome alignment; elite signaling; aid-oversight risk; religious-freedom violations; state capacity/legitimacy.
- Procedure: 2-stage coding(1) descriptive coding of events and policies; (2) analytical coding to classify text segments under mechanisms of the insurgency waiver.
- Mechanism tracing: We connect policy inputs (e.g., amnesty terms) to observed outcomes (e.g., releases without prosecution; community resistance; persistent violence) to assess the plausibility of the waiver mechanism (Beach & Pedersen, 2019).

Triangulation, Validity, and Reliability

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Limitations

- Attribution of causality: This is an observational, document-based study. We do not make claims of causal identification, but rather propose plausible mechanisms buttressed by convergent evidence.
- Measurement error: Fatality and displacement data are often inconsistent across sources. We address this by (1) reporting a range, (2) rigorously documenting available definitions, and (3) favoring datasets with transparent methods (CFR, 2025; IOM, 2024).
- Selection bias: Events that have garnered greater international or domestic salience (e.g. Plateau 2023) are more completely documented than smaller-scale incidents. We attempt to mitigate this by (1) sampling across years and (2) using program-level evidence to understand the broader context (ICG, 2021).
- Elite behavior inference: References to domestic political actors are anonymized and second-hand, even when derived from reputable reportage. We treat these as suggestive signals, not dispositive causal drivers.

Ethics and Researcher Positionality

This research is based on exclusively public secondary sources; no humans were contacted. We nonetheless strive to use trauma-informed language and omit graphic descriptions. The author is aware of and responds to potential normative commitments (e.g. survivor-centred justice) and issues of bias through transparent sourcing, triangulation, and explicit uncertainty statements (Bowen, 2009; Krippendorff, 2018). This includes avoiding categorical claims about external actors' motives where evidence is inconclusive, instead presenting them as debated interpretations and juxtaposing them with official statements or denials where available.

VI. Findings

Table 1. Victimization Statistics in Nigeria (2014–2023)

Year	Estimated Lives Lost (Insurgency-Related)	Estimated Injured	Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)	Key Events / Notes	Primary Sources
2014	4,200	~1,000	~500,000	Chibok abductions, Boko Haram territorial peak	CFR (2025); IOM (2024)
2015	3,500	~800	1.2 million	Increased regional coalition operations	CFR (2025); IOM (2024)
2016	2,800	~700	1.8 million	Launch of Operation Safe Corridor (OSC)	ICG (2021); IOM (2024)
2017	2,200	~600	2.1 million	Expansion of displacement to North-West	IOM (2024)
2018	2,000	~500	2.0 million	Farmer–herder violence intensifies	CFR (2025); HRW (2025)
2019	1,800	~400	2.1 million	ISWAP splinter group expansion	CFR (2025); IOM (2024)
2020	1,900	~500	2.0 million	COVID disruptions, OSC expansion	BudgIT (2024); IOM (2024)
2021	2,100	~600	1.9 million	Renewed IDP movements; government amnesty	IOM (2024); ICG (2021)
2022	2,300	~700	1.8 million	Banditry and intercommunal violence	Amnesty International (2025b)
2023	2,400	~800	3.3 million (national total)	Plateau State Christmas Eve attacks	HRW (2025); CSI (2024)

Note. Fatality estimates combine civilians, security personnel, and insurgents. IDP figures primarily reflect North-East and North-Central states but include national totals where indicated. Figures for 2025 referenced elsewhere in the text are based on preliminary or projected data and are cited as such.

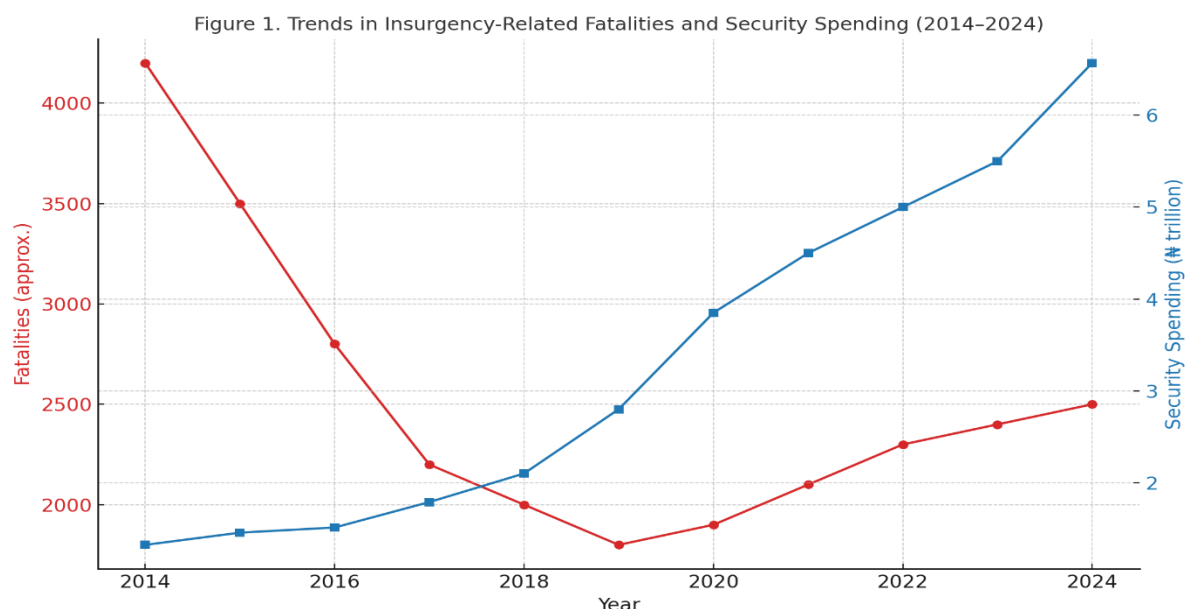
Sources: Council on Foreign Relations (2025); International Organization for Migration (2024); International Crisis Group (2021); Amnesty International (2025b); Human Rights Watch (2025); Christian Solidarity International (2024); BudgIT (2024).

Table 2. Nigeria's Defense and Security Budget (2018–2024)

Year	Total Security Budget (₦ Trillion)	Capital Expenditure (₦ Trillion)	% Increase Year-on-Year	Major Contextual Notes	Primary Sources
2018	1.323	0.145	+16%	Counter-insurgency surge in North-East	BudgIT (2019)
2019	1.456	0.160	+10%	New procurement approvals	BudgIT (2020)
2020	1.512	0.170	+4%	COVID-19 reallocation	Budget Office (2020)
2021	1.789	0.200	+18%	Expanded Operation Safe Corridor	BudgIT (2022)
2022	2.100	0.250	+17%	Increased counter-banditry spending	BudgIT (2023)
2023	2.800	0.350	+33%	Plateau violence response allocations	BudgIT (2024)
2024	3.850	0.500	+37%	New defense modernization funds	BudgIT (2024); TIDS (2025)

Note. Budget values include allocations for the Ministry of Defence, Police Affairs, and other security agencies. Increases reflect nominal spending growth and currency devaluation.

Sources: BudgIT (2019, 2020, 2022, 2023, 2024); Transparency International Defence & Security (2025); Budget Office of the Federation (2020).



VII. Discussion

Dual-Track Counter-Insurgency and the Insurgency Waiver

The machinery of Nigeria's counter-insurgency, evolving over decades, has taken the form of a twinned hard-security and amnesty or DDR (disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration) apparatus that has managed, cumulatively, to reduce the punitive risks for organized insurgent violence, while having meted out inconsistent justice or succor to victims (International Crisis Group [ICG], 2021; Olojo, 2018). This setup represents what the present article defines as the insurgency waiver: the state's formal quest for reconciliation has tended to precede, by a wide margin, any investigation, prosecution, or reparation, to produce a lasting message that insurgency is negotiable and, indeed, incentivizable (Agbibo, 2018; Matfess, 2020). But the waiver is not only legalistic, it is institutional – a path-dependent policy product of hasty reintegration pipelines, murky vetting mechanisms, and slack court ties. Amnesties were not formally scripted into some Latin American DDR processes without judicial offsets in the form of transitional-justice accords (Skaar et al., 2016). The Nigerian example has had no similar development. This compounds the waiver effect.

OSC Application: Boko Haram Reintegration via Operation Safe Corridor

Operation Safe Corridor (OSC) provides a case in point. As indicated above, a low capacity to screen and build cases, weak court coordination, and an absence of long-term monitoring has meant that in the reality of an overburdened and resourced system, reintegration has in effect been the default “exit point” for the accused, even where heinous crimes are committed (ICG, 2021). On the political front, reintegration ceremonies with “graduates” and the optics of vocational-training have been a high-visibility undertaking that can be politically expedient as an alternative to a cumbersome, technical, and by and large invisible prosecutorial effort (Amnesty International, 2025a; United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research [UNIDIR], 2024). The net result of these bureaucratic incentives is a feedback loop privileging the symbolism of “performance” over survivor justice.

Host communities that have received large numbers of ex-combatants also report feeling fearful and resentful in the absence of parallel truth-telling, restitution, or protection mechanisms (ICG, 2021). In the absence of any state-supported accompaniment or reparations for survivors, reintegration as currently practiced offloads the material and psychological costs of peace onto a traumatized population (Kaiser et al., 2019). The result is a negative, self-reinforcing equilibrium: negotiated demobilization without commensurate accountability, and symbolic victim support without durable service delivery—precisely the sort of asymmetry described by the insurgency waiver.

High Spending, Low Deterrence: Why Budgets Have Not Broken the Waiver

Defense and security spending in Nigeria increased from approximately ₦1.3 trillion in 2018 to ₦3.85 trillion in 2024 (BudGIT, 2024). Fatalities and displacement did not meaningfully decrease from previous years. By 2024, there had been an estimated 35,000 total deaths since 2011, and an increasing number of internally displaced persons (International Organization for Migration [IOM], 2024; Council on Foreign Relations [CFR],

2025). Initial reporting indicated that this trend continued in 2025, but year-end figures were not yet available at the time of publication.

The rise in expenditures has bolstered kinetic capacity but has not improved the institutional resilience of the mechanisms of justice – prosecution, witness protection, forensic investigations, and survivor services – needed to break the cycle (Transparency International Defence & Security [TIDS], 2025). In short, the increased spending has disproportionately fattened the kinetic limb of the state while starving the legal limb. In contexts where procurement oversight is weak and institutional controls are diffuse, a surge in resources can further entrench the logic of war-economy over deterrence (TIDS, 2025). This connects Nigeria's domestic fragility gaps to a larger international threat: when states militarize insecurity without investing in accountability, they become chronic contributors to regional instability (World Bank, 2023).

VIII. Case Applications

Boko Haram Reintegration via Operation Safe Corridor.

OSC is a prime example of the insurgency waiver. Although in the letter of the law it mimics the best practices for DDR (psychosocial therapy, skills training), in the spirit of the law many components are missing: differentiation between categories of defectors is flimsy, accountability interfaces are absent, and community rejection is repeated (ICG, 2021; Olojo, 2018). The sequencing error that comes with reintegrating before justice turns rehabilitation into a de facto amnesty, weakening deterrence and confidence of victims in the state (Matfess, 2020). Unlike the demobilization of Colombia's FARC, which at least imposed formal special tribunals and truth-telling obligations for those who committed the most serious crimes, Nigeria's model has less institutional safeguards that reintegration will be contingent on accountability (García-Godos, 2016; Rettberg, 2020).

Chibok Abductions and Negotiated Releases

The 2014 Chibok girls kidnapping remains the most emblematic case of Boko Haram terrorism. While the negotiated releases are understandable as a means to save lives, they took place with few abductors punished and survivors stigmatized, left to untreated trauma and economic exclusion (BBC News, 2014; UNIDIR, 2024). Without follow-up justice, negotiations send a signal that mass abduction is a price worth paying for a bargaining advantage (Amnesty International, 2025a). Survivor-centred justice in this context would have paired release deals with a systematic process of investigation and prosecution, as well as long-term reparations. Elsewhere in transitional-justice processes, survivors have received formal roles on truth hearings or reparations commissions; the lack of similar structures in Chibok proceedings reveals the entrenched nature of the insurgency waiver in Nigeria.

Plateau State Massacres and Selective Impunity

The Plateau massacres provide a stark example of Nigeria's entrenched failure to guarantee equal justice. Along with recurring farmer–herder conflicts, intercommunal violence and periodic pogroms have killed thousands of Christians over several decades as a direct result of targeted attacks and reprisal attacks by Fulani extremists (HRW, 2025). In the 2001 Jos riots more than 1,000 died during retaliatory killings that followed a political disagreement (HRW, 2025). In 2010, hundreds more were killed in the Kuru Karama massacre, an intercommunal dispute that became communal violence (HRW, 2025).

This cycle of violence deepened in the December 2023 Christmas Eve attacks, when suspected Fulani militants launched coordinated raids on more than 20 rural villages in Bokkos, Barkin Ladi, and Mangu local government areas (LGAs), killing at least 140, including 113 in Bokkos (CSW, 2024; CSI, 2024). More than 10,000 people were displaced, as militants torched homes, churches, and farms with arson and gunfire. Governor Caleb Mutfwang decried the “calculated and premeditated genocide” and declared a state of emergency, but as of mid-2025, no major arrests or prosecutions have been made and in several cases security forces arrived hours after the attacks (CSI, 2024; Amnesty International, 2025b).

Selective impunity has continued into 2024–2025. More than 1,300 Christians have been killed and nearly 30,000 displaced by Fulani herder incursions on ancestral farmland in the first quarter of 2025 alone (Amnesty International, 2025a; ICC, 2025). On Palm Sunday 2025, 54 worshipers were massacred in Mangu after church service. A string of attacks on April 14 in Bokkos killed dozens of Christians and displaced hundreds more, prompting an equivocal presidential promise of a “crackdown” in the context of weak policing and spiraling intercommunal land disputes (Le Monde, 2025; NPF, 2025). In September 2025, militants reportedly advanced toward Plateau's borders with neighboring states, taking control of key hills and adding to displacement pressures (Genocide Watch, 2025).

The 2023 Plateau atrocities and ongoing violence through 2025 show how the insurgency waiver relates to ethno-religious and communal massacres as well as jihadist violence. Perpetrators of organized mass atrocities are given far less prosecutorial priority than lower-level crime (Open Doors, 2025; HRW, 2025). Selective justice in turn undermines public trust in justice institutions and rule of law, and communicates to

potential perpetrators that some violence can pay off, a long-standing marker of fragile-state security politics in comparative perspective.

Victims at the Center: What the Waiver Costs Survivors

For survivors, the insurgency waiver means cumulative disadvantage: extended displacement, untreated trauma, disrupted education, and deep stigma—especially for women and girls who were sexually assaulted or forced into marriage (Kaiser et al., 2019; Olufadewa et al., 2024; UNIDIR, 2024). Amnesty International (2025a) reports that many female survivors continue to lack psychosocial support and livelihood assistance years after being freed. If perpetrators can receive reintegration benefits but victims receive no help, the moral structure of the social contract is undermined: assistance and welfare are given to those who abused it. Through a Social Contract Theory lens, this inverts the expected distribution of benefits and burdens between citizens and state, making it rational for affected communities to question the value of compliance and civic cooperation.

Elite Signaling and the Politics of Impunity

Political elites also reinforce the waiver by signaling. Political leaders who mute criticism of sectarian violence or instrumentalize hate speech as a political strategy implicitly reward pick-and-choose justice and normalise political convenience (Vanguard, 2022; Premium Times, 2023). Audience expectations are shaped by the signal: the reputational cost of inflammatory language is lowered, the use of violence by groups is justified and impunity becomes institutionalised. The cost is not only domestic erosion but also international reputational damage, as Nigeria's credibility in global human-rights and counter-terrorism arenas suffers.

Aid Oversight and External Narratives: Blurred Lines, Missed Leverage

A congressional inquiry in 2025 into U.S.-funded programs implemented by USAID found that the oversight mechanisms were insufficient to detect the use of funds but did not establish definitive evidence that the organization intended to support terrorist groups (Reuters, 2025; U.S. Agency for International Development Office of Inspector General [USAID OIG], 2025). Politically, though, the affair gave additional legitimacy to the widespread perception of Western connivance and watered down international pressure for reform. Nigerian authorities denounced “foreign interference” and external actors sought to scapegoat local corruption. Periodic Western suggestions of broadening military cooperation to include bases in the south framed insecurity as a geopolitical issue of market access and resources (Le Monde, 2025), rather than a deficit of justice and local capacity. U.S. Embassy and USAID releases made clear that any such security assistance would be conditional on Nigerian consent, supporting (rather than supplanting) Nigerian institutions, but it is nonetheless important to read these controversies as contestable evidence of “neocolonial” designs. The result is friction without a fulcrum: a hardening of distrust but little investment in prosecution or reparation capacity—the very means that could leverage the waiver.

Social Contract in a Supporting Role: Legitimacy, Not Firepower, as Binding Constraint

Social Contract Theory provides the normative logic for why increasing budgets and foreign aid haven't yet bought stability. Theory works across Hobbes (1651/2012), Locke (1689/1988), Rousseau (1762/2011), and Rawls (1971) as the terms of agreement where citizens obey and cooperate with the state in return for its provision of protection and justice. Where the state confers an enticement on the organized offender (reintegration packages) and spurns the survivor with nothing left to lose, it breaches it. In Nigeria, such breaches corrode civic reciprocity—from tips to grievance redress through formal institutions—and raise the cost of doing the business of governing, make fragility more intractable. Legitimacy of the social contract, not coercive capacity, is the binding constraint. The insurgency waiver remains the analytical linchpin, however: social contract theory is an analytical scaffolding to make the case that impunity erodes state resilience. That is why the reforms that we propose below are not only technocratic, but also normative interventions in repairing the contract between Nigeria and its citizens.

Policy Levers that Directly Target the Waiver

Several actionable reforms emerge from this analysis.

- DDR sequencing should put accountability first: Establish two at-intake “lanes”: a serious-crimes lane that leads to investigation/prosecution, and an OSC lane that leads to rehabilitation and civil-society monitoring (ICG, 2021; Olojo, 2018). Incorporate truth-telling and victim-impact statements as a compulsory precondition for reintegration. Sequencing of this kind reasserts the rule that perpetrators of serious violations will be held legally accountable, and it restores citizens' trust that the state will protect them from organized violence.
- Victim reparations as statutory rights: Create a national reparations fund with dedicated security-sector funding for health, psychosocial care, education, and economic reintegration, with special attention to women and children released from captivity (Amnesty International, 2025a; UNIDIR, 2024). Survivors-

centred policy responses to conflict would prioritise the rights of victims over the reintegration of insurgents, reaffirming the moral balance of the social contract.

- Prosecutorial capacity & witness protection: Establish special atrocity-crime prosecution units with forensic investigators and data analysts, and a secure witness-protection infrastructure and public-facing case-tracking dashboards (HRW, 2025). Frequent prosecutions over time institutionalize the often abstract principles of accountability and responsibility as routine practice, which helps counter the impunity calculus that “insurgency pays.”
- • Tying security-spending transparency to service delivery: Make a share of security-sector budgets dependent on and tied to measurable justice-sector outputs (indictments filed; survivor services provided; OSC at intake vetted through serious-crimes lanes), among others (BudgIT, 2024; TIDS, 2025). This would operationalize fiscal governance reforms by effectively tying spending to performance on the state’s social-contract responsibilities, but also creates pathways by which security spending becomes justice and accountability spending, as well as “bulletproofing”.
- Elite accountability standards: Enshrine joint pledges by all political leaders to swiftly and publicly condemn sectarian violence and to sanction political figures who incite violence (Premium Times, 2023; Vanguard, 2022). Elite norms then become part of the solution rather than the problem, signalling to citizens that violence is politically costly rather than electorally rewarded.
- Conditioning external aid to fund justice institutions, not optics: Refocus donor assistance away from generic counterterrorism training and towards justice-sector capacity, reparations, and independent DDR monitoring (Reuters, 2025; USAID OIG, 2025). This can shift international dynamics away from purely strategic or kinetic logics and towards the institutional foundations needed to repair Nigeria’s social contract..

Nigeria’s insecurity persists, in other words, not because the state is asleep, but because its leading responses (kinetic escalation, performative reintegration) do not address the underlying logics and calculations that enable the insurgency to continue. As long as accountability and survivor repair are marginalised rather than prioritised in policy responses, the calculation of impunity as a reward for organised violence will endure. The insurgency waiver, in this sense, is both a domestic governance failure and an international security threat: it undermines the Nigerian state’s legitimacy, perpetuates cycles of atrocity, and weakens the global norm that impunity must never pay.

IX. Conclusion

This article’s objective is to provide a new analytical framework for thinking about the asymmetric governance of violence in Nigeria. The theory of the “insurgency waiver” is proposed as a conceptual optic through which to interpret institutionalized patterns of impunity in Nigeria’s security governance. The concept is developed as an incisive normative diagnosis of an asymmetric protection racket wherein the social contract is regularly and at a normalized level broken with regard to organized perpetrators of violence and upheld vis-à-vis the victims of insurgency and communal violence, who go without justice or care. At the intersection of cross-cutting patterns in the politics of counter-insurgency program implementation and defense budget allocations on the one hand, and ethno-religious attacks and humanitarian response on the other, this article argues that a consistent real-world observation and experience emerges: amnesty and reintegration are systematically privileged over accountability and reparations.

This is not only a gap in policy or administration but a normative rupture of state responsibility. In offering impunity to perpetrators of insurgency without proportional justice for victims, the Nigerian state is hollowing out its monopoly on legitimate violence and the moral credibility on which it is built. This unequal protection also offends against the principle of the social contract in which obedience is given in exchange for security and justice (Hobbes, 1651/2012; Locke, 1689/1988; Rousseau, 1762/2011; Rawls, 1971). If the state is to protect, it must do so impartially. By shielding those who use violence more than those who suffer from it, it violates the covenant upon which its power is legitimate.

The “insurgency waiver” is a conceptual lexicon through which to name this rupture. It is the policy equilibrium of impunity where insurgents, militias, or sectarian groups of all kinds learn that violence can be used to bring the state to the negotiating table or to the bounty. In contrast, citizens learn that peaceful lawfulness neither assures protection nor reparation. As the article will demonstrate, the durability of this equilibrium is a primary reason why mass security expenditures, which are projected to increase by nearly 200 percent between 2018 and 2024 (BudgIT, 2024), have not brought commensurate levels of security or justice. One can budget for guns, but not credibility.

The social contract perspective also makes clear the higher stakes. State legitimacy is not purchased with bullets but with reciprocal justice. The most fundamental implication of the state’s social contract is that it must act with justice towards the governed as the governed must act with loyalty to the state. Only when citizens see justice in the way that others are treated—insurgents punished, survivors restored—does the bond of governance between ruler and ruled endure. Conversely, every massacre with no prosecutions, every

reintegration ceremony with no accountability, widens the gap between Nigerian state and the people it is bound to protect.

Recommendations for way forward, then, are thus all on breaking the insurgency waiver. The state must recalibrate its security policy away from being amnesty-first and towards being accountability-first by operationalising the principles of due process and transitional justice. In turn, this can be done through (i) integrating prosecutorial screening into all demobilisation programs; (ii) enshrining survivor reparations as a statutory right; (iii) linking defense budget allocations to verifiable justice metrics; and (iv) insisting that all elite and international actors model zero-tolerance for sectarian or insurgent violence. The appropriate course of action would benefit victims in this way. It would also be a necessary retooling of the very capacity, credibility and sustainability of governance itself. It would reframe the fight against insurgency away from being a cycle of reaction and forgiveness and towards being a prevention and justice framework; and it would begin to operationalise the fundamental promise of the social contract: equal protection by equal and fair laws. Most of all, such policy prescriptions would begin to break both internal and external historical patterns that have often rendered Nigerian lives as beyond the pale of international security calculus. In sum, it is the contribution to the broader literature on armed conflict and governance to demonstrate that state failure is not only the absence of state capacity or action but often the misdirection of state incentives. The article offered a reinterpretation of the Nigerian security paradox through a hybrid theoretical prism: the insurgency waiver as an empirical logic and the social contract as a normative reference. Taken together, the core analytical point is that the most effective long-term weapon against insurgency is neither force nor funding but fairness.

Additional Tables

Table 3. Key Thematic Mechanisms of the Insurgency Waiver

Mechanism	Description	Empirical Example	Implication
Conditional Amnesty without Accountability	Surrendering insurgents benefit from leniency without judicial screening	Operation Safe Corridor (ICG, 2021)	Signals reduced cost of insurgency
Victim Neglect	Survivors lack reparations and psychosocial support	Boko Haram survivors (Amnesty International, 2025a)	Deepens grievance and delegitimizes state
Selective Justice	Non-insurgent crimes prosecuted more harshly	Plateau massacres, few convictions (HRW, 2025)	Creates two-tier justice system
Budgetary Misalignment	Increased defense spending fails to reduce violence	₦3.85 trillion in 2024 (BudgIT, 2024)	Indicates inefficiency and leakage
Elite Signaling	Political leaders downplay sectarian violence	Deleted condemnation post (Vanguard, 2022)	Normalizes intolerance and impunity

Table 4. Summary of Policy Recommendations

Policy Domain	Proposed Action	Expected Outcome	Relevant Literature
Accountability Framework	Create two-tier DDR process separating minor from serious offenders	Improved justice credibility	ICG (2021); Olojo (2018)
Victim Reparations	National survivor fund for health, education, and livelihoods	Restored trust and healing	Amnesty International (2025a); UNIDIR (2024)
Prosecutorial Capacity	Establish specialized atrocity-crimes unit and witness protection	Effective deterrence	HRW (2025)
Budget Oversight	Tie security funds to measurable justice metrics	Reduced corruption, better outcomes	BudgIT (2024); TIDS (2025)
Political Conduct	Enforce elite codes of public accountability	Consistent condemnation of violence	Premium Times (2023); Vanguard (2022)
International Cooperation	Channel foreign aid toward justice infrastructure	Sustainable, non-militarized support	Reuters (2025); USAID OIG (2025)

Table 5. Data Sources Used for Triangulation

Data Type	Primary Source	Reliability Criteria	Used for Analysis Section
Conflict Fatalities	CFR Nigeria Security Tracker (2025)	Event-based coding verified by CFR analysts	Table 1, Figure 1
Displacement Data	IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix (2024)	Biannual on-ground verification	Victim outcomes
Budget Data	BudgIT (2019–2024), Budget Office (2020)	Cross-checked with official gazettes	Table 2
Human Rights Documentation	Amnesty International, HRW (2023–2025)	Methodologically transparent reports	Discussion (victim justice)
DDR Program Analysis	ICG (2021); Olojo (2018)	Field-based qualitative evidence	OSC analysis
Governance Corruption Risk	Transparency International Defence & Security (2025)	Peer-reviewed corruption index	Discussion (budgetary inefficiency)

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