CRIME IN NIGERIA: AN ANALYSIS OF INTELLIGENCE FAILURE, INTER-GENCY COORDINATION, AND NATIONAL SECURITY CHALLENGES

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Abstract

This article examines the persistent crime challenges confronting Nigeria and argues that poor intelligence gathering, collation and utilisation by security agencies have contributed significantly to the growth of criminal activities across the country. Despite the existence of more than four intelligence agencies, crimes such as terrorism, kidnapping, armed robbery and banditry continue to pose serious threats to national security and public safety. The study further explores systemic factors responsible for intelligence failure, including inadequate funding, limited technological capacity, institutional rivalry among security organisations and political interference in intelligence operations. The research adopts an interpretative methodology and relies on secondary sources of data, including academic literature, government documents, policy reports and media publications. The study is anchored on state failure theory, which provides a framework for understanding the inability of state institutions to effectively respond to security threats. Findings reveal that lapses and errors within intelligence agencies have created opportunities for criminal groups to exploit weak security structures, resulting in recurring violence, increased insecurity and declining public confidence in the states capacity to protect citizens. The study recommends enhanced intelligence sharing, continuous training and capacity building for security personnel, improved technological support and greater utilisation of community-based intelligence as strategies for combating criminality and strengthening national security.

Keywords: Intelligence Failure, Terrorism and Banditry, Security Agencies, Community-Based Intelligence, Crime and Insecurity.

Introduction

Crime in Nigeria though a gradual and intricate problem, is attitudinal, historically, structurally and institutionally defective. Notwithstanding the proliferation of intelligence agencies like the

Department of State Services (DSS), the National Intelligence Agency (NIA), and the Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA) etc., the country's crime rates like banditry, terrorism, kidnaping for ransom and organised crime have continued to soar (Adegoke, 2020). Nigeria's insecurities have historical basis, stretching from the colonial resistance and the traumatic long-term impacts of this civil war (1967–1970), which led to further political fragmentation and militarisation of civil life (Osaghae, 1998). Thereafter, successive military and civilian administrations made effort at reorganisation of the intelligence, however, corruption, poor training and in effective and inefficient measures of control worked against them (Alemika, 2013). The consequence of the collapse of intelligence systems is devastating as evidenced in occurrences such as the Plateau State massacres in which more than 200 civilians were killed in-spite of heavy security deployment (Odita, 2023). The military operations conducted to free kidnapped students in Kaduna were also hampered by false or unactionable intelligence (Reuters, 2024). The emergence of Boko Haram in the early 2000 and the subsequent rise of banditry across northern Nigeria have exposed persistent weaknesses in Nigeria's intelligence architecture, particularly in threat detection, early warning and preventive security operations (Akinyetun, 2021; Onuoha, 2014; Nwangwu et al., 2020). Evidently, intelligence failure remains one of the major factors contributing to the persistence of kidnapping, banditry, and terrorism in Nigeria. Intelligence failure refers to the inability of security agencies to collect, analyse, share, and act upon security information capable of preventing criminal and terrorist activities. In 2026, the increasing frequency of attacks across several parts of Nigeria suggests weakness in intelligence gathering, coordination, surveillance and early warning system.

The Nigerian citizenry is always the victim whenever there is an intelligence operational failure such as a failure in gathering or analysing information. The kidnapping, school abductions, and farmer-herder clashes, all incidents that are on the rise in Nigeria, can be traced to a disjointed system of sharing of intelligence amongst security agencies. In other words, rather than prosecuting cases in a synergistic manner in which intelligence is shared among agencies, many of these agencies choose to work in silos, withholding information from each other (Igwe, 2022). This piecemeal strategy of tackling security challenges is not just often inadequate but also endangers the small communities and subsequently erodes the already fragile public trust in their security agencies.

This study intends to examine, among others, various trends of intelligence failure and prolonged crime across Nigeria. The emphasis is placed upon stressing the urgent need for coordinated and integrated intelligence structures, as well as inter-agency cooperation, both of which are imperative if Nigeria is to combat corruption and bring down crime. In addressing the shortcomings and offering solutions, this research will provide a scientifically based recommendation to policymakers for the design of more efficient and proactive national security strategies.

Purpose of the Study

The aim of this study is to investigate why crime persists in Nigeria through an analysis of intelligence failure. The specific objectives of this study are to:

1. Examine the historical and contemporary patterns of crime in Nigeria in relation to the role of intelligence agencies.
2. Identify the major factors responsible for intelligence failure in Nigeria's fight against crime.

Research Questions

1. What are the historical and contemporary patterns of crime in Nigeria, and how have intelligence agencies responded to them?

2. What institutional, political, and socio-economic factors are responsible for intelligence failure?

Literature Review

Crime

Crime is a complex concept that encompasses acts or omissions that violate the criminal laws of a society and are punishable by the state (Clinard & Meier, 2016; Hagan, 2019; Farrington, 2020). Sociologists contend that crime is socially constructed – it emerges in response to cultural expectations, political power, and historical situation (Durkheim, 1895/1982). What one culture sees as a crime another might not. Cybercrime for example was non-existent in pre-colonial Nigeria but has now grown to be one of the fastest growing criminal enterprises of the digital age (Akinfala, 2021).

Crime in Nigeria ranges from the traditional offences such as armed robbery, murder, stealing etc. to newer crimes such as terrorism, kidnapping for ransom, oil bunkering, ritual killing, yahoo-yahoo, etc. Authors such as Otu and Elechi (2018) assert that crime in Nigeria has become systematised due to political patronage, weak administration, and social alienation. It's not individual deviance but these structural defects that are responsible for criminality that has become ingrained in the Nigerian life.

Intelligence

Intelligence involves the systematic collection, processing, analysis, production and dissemination of information to support national security decision making, identify emerging threats, and facilitate their prevention (Lowenthal, 2017; Gill & Phythian, 2020; Diderichsen, 2019). Because it is not about raw data collection; it is about turning that raw data into something you can use. It is the job of the Department of State Services (DSS) and the National Intelligence Agency (NIA) in Nigeria. But on the other hand, they are challenged by the fragile forces of mechanism, non-technological societies and corruption (Odita, 2023) that relegates them to the margin.

Intelligence Failure

Intelligence failure is best understood as a systemic or institutional failure in which intelligence organisations are unable to effectively collect, analyse, integrate, disseminate or apply information to anticipate and prevent threats to national security, rather than merely the shortcomings of individual intelligence officers (Betts, 1978, 2007; Marrin, 2011; Phythian, 2020). In Nigeria intelligence failures become somewhat mundane and can be easily attributed to the story of Chibok and Dapchi kidnappings and the attendant wave of kidnappings (Inquirer, 2023; Reuters, 2024). This is also a result of the absence of effective surveillance mechanisms, inter-agency rivalry, political interference, and corruption (Otu & Elechi, 2018; Alemika, 2013). intelligence failure in Nigeria is not just one that is technical in nature (as might be in the US) but a structural one where the institutions are largely incapable of projecting or counteracting criminal threats. Also, intelligence failure remains one of the major factors contributing to the persistence of kidnapping, banditry, and terrorism in Nigeria. Intelligence failure refers to the inability of security agencies to collect, analyse, share, and act upon security information capable of preventing criminal and terrorist activities. In 2026, the increasing frequency of attackers across several parts of Nigeria suggest weakness in intelligence gathering, coordination, surveillance, and early warning systems (African Defence Forum, 2026).

The Historical and Contemporary Patterns of Crime in Nigeria in Relation to the Role of Intelligence Agencies

History, Socio-Politics and Economy of Crime in Nigeria Crime in Nigeria has metamorphosed as a result of certain historical, socio-political, and economic scenarios. Since the pre-colonial era to the current times, crimes have evolved and intensified from the era of simplistic criminality to a more organised and complex era as culprits engage in new and sophisticated crimes such as terrorism, banditry and cybercrimes among others. Even such criminal activities that tend to be attributed to social conditions have been exacerbated by unmet challenges faced by our intelligence community. The absence of a united intelligence counter-means crime will continue to prosper despite a swathe of security agencies.

Historical Patterns of Crime in Nigeria

The development of crime in Nigeria was influenced by the colonial legacy and the post-independence political instability. Nigeria had the issue of local crime under colonial rule; this was as a result of the control White men had over the local government. While this resistance to colonial rule sometimes took a political turn, it did not involve the sorts of mass criminality that emerged later. In the years following independence, the Nigerian Civil War (1967–1970) dislodged lives on a grand scale, shattered society and permitted the proliferation of small arms and the breakdown of community solidarity. These conditions create an enabling environment for organised crime and militant groups to become entrenched, particularly in urban peri-urban areas where weak governance, socioeconomic inequalities and inadequate security institutions facilitate criminal activities (Ellis, 2016; Okoli & Lenshie, 2018; De Boer, 2022, Ojo, 2020).

Faced with these pressures and in a bid to address these security threats, the Nigerian government has established a number of security and intelligence organisations such the National Intelligence Agency (NIA), (then) Directorate of Security Services (DSS) (now called state security service) and the Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA). But they were chaotic, underfinanced and also hobbled by political manipulation, making them unable to combat crime effectively. Nigeria still witnessed high level criminal activities such as armed robbery, political thuggery which were largely uncontested or uncontainable on account failed systemic intelligence (Igwe, 2022).

The Role of Intelligence Agencies in Historical Crime Patterns

Nigerian intelligence agencies have had a reputation of inadequate crime-fighting capability throughout history. The absence of reliable information gathered by the intelligence community continued to undermine the state's ability to control the post-war reconstruction and to keep the country safe. For instance, the government's inability to control the armed groups who took root in the countryside meant that they could only spread their sway and carry out criminal acts with impunity. They were not afraid simply of ignorance; but also, of inaction in the presence of knowledge (Alemika, 2013). The intelligence services have been larded with postures since the post-civil war years. The military government ruled by Gen. Sani Abacha instead turned the intelligence agencies into political weapons for use against political opponents, not organised crime. The political interference in the intelligence institutions weakened such security institutions while as the general violence escalated, people were exposed to violence (Alemika, 2013).

Trends of Crime in Nigeria

Even Nigeria of late, is also a home of life for all kinds of crime in different aspect and level. One of the most serious threats has been terrorism with the spread of the Boko Haram uprising to the northeast. Even after warnings from some members of the group and from intelligence reports that had repeatedly sounded alarms over the group's expansion, Nigerian intelligence agencies failed to act swiftly. Boko Haram has grown in power, slaughtering thousands and displacing millions. Coupled with this intelligence failure and lousy co-ordination among the military, police and the intelligence services and the perfect brew for the insurgency to grow wings. Also, violence

and insecurity in northeastern Nigeria have been compounded by inconsistent and poorly coordinated responses from security institutions, which have limited the effectiveness of counterinsurgency operations and enabled armed groups to sustain their activities (Onuoha, 2014; Nwangwu et., al., 2020; Ojo, 2020). Similarly, banditry, kidnapping and armed robberies are on the rise in Nigeria's north-west and north-central states. Gangs of desert bandits, whose members commonly known as "bandits," have been allowed to roam freely between villages, killing, and kidnapping for ransom, they have engaged in cattle rustling. Despite numerous intelligence reports and local alerts, security forces have not been able to pre-empt these attacks. The absence of synergy among intelligence organisation and information is also a factor which made these criminal groups operate freely (Akinfala 2021).

Intelligence Failures and Crime in Nigeria

The central challenge in Nigeria's continuing crime problem is the consistency with which its intelligence agencies have failed to get ahead of, and deal with, threats. Although the country has numerous intelligence agencies, it has been unable to collect, analyse and act upon intelligence in a meaningful manner. Intelligence agencies at work Intelligence agencies often work in silos, fighting each other for resources and information, a dynamic that leads to a disjointed and ineffective security effort. This lack of sharing of vital information has made the government response to emerging threats ineffective (Odita 2023).

Six years after Boko Haram kidnapping, Chibok still waits for the rest of its girls One example is provided by Nigeria's Boko Haram. Despite the intelligence community holding information on the group's activities and radicalisation in north-east Nigeria, security forces took no measures to prevent the group developing into a major insurgency. Also, all warnings on intelligence about bandit groups' movement in the north were disregarded or rejected so that these groups could wreak their havoc without interruption from forces of security (Odita, 2023).

Systemic and Political Factors Behind Intelligence Failures

Intelligence failures in Nigeria are not just technological, but rooted in systemic problems, including corruption and political meddling. This was never good for the intelligence agencies, as political hacks often filled these positions and the intel agencies had to make up for their incompetence. Corruption in the security sector has resulted in misappropriation of resources, and the agencies have become weakened in the face of increasing organised crime (Igwe, 2022). What's more, intelligence agencies aren't trained and don't have the capabilities to gather and interpret intelligence effectively. Lack of investment in contemporary tools and forensic capacities has made intelligence agencies incapable of monitoring criminals' networks, especially in digital crime era. For instance, the proliferation of cyber-crime in Nigeria, popularly referred to as 'Yahoo Yahoo,' has been driven by weaknesses in cyber intelligence capabilities, weak law enforcement, limited digital forensic capacity and deficiencies in cyber threat detection and response (Tade & Aliyu, 2011; Longe et al., 2009; Tade & Adeniyi, 2020; Akinbowale et al., 2020).

Contemporary Crime and the Role of Intelligence Agencies

The contemporary landscape of crime in Nigeria is characterised by increasing sophistication and coordination among criminal groups. From terrorism to cybercrime, these modern criminal threats require a robust and coordinated response from intelligence agencies. However, Nigeria's intelligence agencies continue to struggle with internal rivalries, corruption, and lack of technological tools. The emergence of cybercrime, particularly online fraud and identity theft, highlights the intelligence community's failure to adapt to new forms of criminal activity. Sincerely speaking, the current state of our intelligence agencies' digital surveillance is worrisome.

Frankly, the way security agencies are lagging while criminals exploit vulnerabilities is alarming. The increasing sophisticated of cyber enable crime has outpaced the capacity of many security and intelligence agencies to develop effective cyber threat intelligence, digital forensic capabilities and proactive response mechanisms, thereby increasing national vulnerability (Longe et al., 2009; Akinbowale et al., 2020).

The Imperative of Intelligence Reform

Addressing crimes' growing complexity requires much more than surface-level adjustments in the security sector. It calls for foundational reform within our entire intelligence framework. Rather than letting entrenched inter-agency rivalries fester, genuine and systemic cooperation must finally take centre stage. Improved coordination among security agencies is hardly a wish at this point rather it's absolutely a fundamental imperative.

The Nigerian security agencies are yet to come to terms with the sophistications in weaponry hence they are still hanging onto outdated tools or obsolete equipment and fragmented intelligence-sharing. That cannot guarantee a possible solution in sight. Today's crime has assumed sophisticated dimensions and there is need to adopt sophisticated technologies that can easily outpace our current responses. There's a pressing need for not just advanced monitoring equipment and modern data analytics, but a truly integrated and streamlined information channels across all security agencies.

Honestly, the status quo has emboldened organised crime. Criminal groups operate with apparent impunity, benefiting from splintered intelligence and the persistent shadow of corruption and apparent or chronic underfunding. This toxic mix undermines the capabilities of every institution saddled with the responsibility of safeguarding the nation and its citizens.

Prioritising genuine police reform is not the only panacea to addressing the culture of impunity and corruption but Nigeria needs deep, structural reform across intelligence services. Enhanced agency coordination, sustainable investment in state-of-the-art technology, and most critically, a renewed foundation of public trust in intelligence institutions. These are essential and only with such comprehensive changes can the state credibly deliver any real protection to its citizens as criminal threats continue to escalate.

Major Causes of Intelligence Failure in Crime Fighting in Nigeria

The persistent shortcomings of Nigerian intelligence agencies in addressing domestic security threats can be traced to several underlying issues. Notably, inter-agency rivalry, entrenched corruption, insufficient resources, political interference, and the absence of meaningful community collaboration consistently undermine intelligence efforts. These problems do not exist in isolation; rather, they interact in complex ways, collectively eroding the effectiveness of crime control mechanisms across the country. Aside from that, it will also explain how such limitations affect the ability of the intelligence agencies in Nigeria to detect, deter and respond to crimes like terrorism, kidnapping, banditry, and cybercrime. Use active voice to emphasise the critical roles and responsibilities of both the intelligence agencies and the state in managing these issues.

Institutional Rivalry

The competition among numerous security and intelligence agencies is one of the most critical causes of intelligence failure in Nigeria. Nigeria is known for having a range of intelligence agencies (DSS, NIA, DIA, and the Police Intelligence Bureau) among them. That, at least structurally, suggest the makings of a cohesive national security framework. In practice, though, the reality falls short. Despite their numbers, these organisations often function in isolation, each prioritising its own agenda rather than collaborating for collective security. This is not merely

anecdotal; Igwe (2022) explicitly notes that genuine inter-agency cooperation is more the exception than the rule. Information sharing, when it occurs, is limited, with critical intelligence frequently compartmentalised instead of distributed for the broader good. Institutional rivalry only compounds these problems. Rather than promoting collective action, agencies routinely compete for budgets, status, and influence. This competitive dynamic encourages a culture of secrecy and information hoarding. The result? Operational inefficiency and a weakened overall security apparatus. Alemika (2013) points to this rivalry as a significant reason for slow responses to new security threats and missed opportunities for early intervention.

In essence, the lack of effective inter-agency coordination compromises national security. When agencies operate in isolation and guard information, the entire system becomes vulnerable to a wide variety of threats, from terrorism to organised crime. The outcome is a loosely connected security framework, more susceptible to exploitation by adversaries.

Corruption

The reason for intelligence failure in Nigeria is because of corruption in intelligence organisations. Corruption takes various forms, but varies from abuse of funds to be used for intelligence work, to politicisation of intelligence for personal or political gain to stifling important information to protect the corrupt people or institutions from scrutiny.

Resource mismanagement directly influences the degree to which intelligence agencies can detect and prevent crime. The average cost to small businesses is $188,242 in losses from such attacks, with 60 percent failing within six months when they are victimised. “It’s not just that people are making life more difficult for industry,” writes Adegoke (2020). Corruption also makes intelligence collection and analysis untrustworthy. Contrary, to this position, Igwe (2022) contends that in a security sector, where corrupt practices have become entrenched, they would all have debilitating effects on the quality of intelligence gathered and processed. Officials in intelligence agencies can always be counted on to ignore or otherwise play down certain facts for personal reasons or political considerations, with the result that intelligence reports themselves are either incomplete, inaccurate or of a false nature. This defeats the purpose of the full-cycle intelligence and makes it impossible for the government to take a targeted response to acts of crime.

Inadequate Resources and Training

One of the major causes of intelligence failure in Nigeria is inadequate funding, limited resources and insufficient training of intelligence personnel. The Nigerian security system has experienced persistent funding constraints, which have weakened operational effectiveness across intelligence and law enforcement agencies. Intelligence services also frequently lack modern surveillance technologies, secure communication systems, forensic capabilities and data analysis tools required for effective intelligence collection and processing. Without these resources, security agencies face difficulties in gathering, analysing and disseminating timely intelligence needed to detect and prevent criminal activities before the occur (Ratcliffe, 2016; Bottema & Telep, 2019; Gill & Phythian, 2020).

And the training of intelligence officers is also bad and they do not have the tool to fulfil their mission. Lack of sufficient training in intelligence analysis, surveillance equipment and counter intelligence measures limit the capacity of the agencies in spotting and intercepting crime. According to Adegoke (2020) insufficient training results in the under-efficacy of the officers in terms of technical knowledge in carrying out threat evaluation and timely response.

In addition, not staying current with intelligence technology adds to the challenge. While the world is moving from analogue to more sophisticated forms of crime, Nigeria's intelligence agencies have been slow to catch up, leaving huge gaps in the country's security architecture.

Political Interference

Politicisation of the intelligence community has been a problem in Nigeria that has persisted for several decades. In some countries, intelligence agencies are prone to political interference, serving personal or party interests and not that of national security. This kind of interference in intelligence work, weakens the unbiassed nature of espionage operations, elevating security issues to the level of party politics. Commercialisation of security services and secret police in Nigeria: An empirical investigation 2 of abuses by intelligence agencies from their statutory responsibility as autonomous entities for protecting the security of the State (Alemika, 2013). When intelligence agencies are compelled to put political considerations ahead of considerations of security, attention is necessarily deflected from lawlessness towards protecting the state from its enemies. So, for example, during election campaigns, intelligence services are sometimes deployed to collect political intelligence for a political party, as opposed to monitoring security threats like terrorism or organised crime. Consequently, the crooks take advantage of political interference, and whereas intelligence agencies cannot profess to know it all, criminals are able to thrive since they know that criminal money will talk louder than intelligence.

Lack of Community Trust and Involvement

The issue of mutual trust between the intelligence agencies and the local people also contributes to intelligence failure in Nigeria. Collective intelligence for local crime prevention has been identified as one of the strategies that works best: it is consulting people within the area in order to identify the threats and the hot spots of crime in order to combat crime, but, in Nigeria, there is a gulf between intelligence gathering and local communities. This distrust is a product of the belief that the Nigerian security agencies are grossly ineffective, corrupt, and high-handed in the use of their powers (Igwe, 2022). Communities tend to distrust and fear intelligence agencies and often do not come forward to provide information about criminal or potentially criminal activity. It is impossible to gather good intelligence without active community cooperation – intelligence driven by community members and shared in real time. In banditry and also in kidnapping, the local population has a lot of information and intelligence around this issue, and so on, and that information is withheld and not provided to the security agencies, and when asked why, they cite a number of reasons: fear of retaliation; lack of confidence in the security services and law enforcement agencies, illiteracy, poor communication infrastructure, etc. The absence of community engagement and confidence in the intelligence system hinders prospective crime prevention and gives freedom of operation to criminal groups.

Finally, inefficacy of Nigeria's intelligence capacity to tackle crime remains rooted in the areas of inter-agency and intra-organisational rivalry, corruption, insufficient funding, and political meddling as well as community apathy. These issues weaken intelligence performance in making timely and coordinated response to new security challenges. Nigeria must fix its intelligence agencies, invest in modern technologies, and build bridges with local communities to address these challenges. "Nigeria must get to this level if it wants to improve its intelligence capability, to curb criminality.

Theoretical Framework

State Failure Theory is the theory formulated by Robert I. Rotberg in 2004. The theory emphasises that weak, ineffectual, or corrupt governance structures compromise the capacity of a state to carry out its core functions, not least in the three foundational roles of security, rule of law, and service delivery. When a state loses its grip on authority, on order, and on security, criminality, insurrection, and destabilisation are likely to follow, accelerating the dynamic of collapse and making recovery for the state from that collapse that much more difficult. Rotberg contends that a failed or failing state is one where institutions fall apart and the government is unable to deliver for and respond to its citizens. Again, applying Rotberg's argument to Nigeria, intelligence failure

has become a major contributor to national insecurity. Despite repeated warnings, security agencies often fail to detect, prevent, or respond effectively to criminal activities. Several incidents of mass kidnapping, terrorist attacks, banditry raids and communal violence have revealed shortcoming in intelligence collection, intelligence analysis and intelligence dissemination.

In Nigeria, the State Failure Theory is very apt in the continuance of crime and insecurity despite the presence of many security and intelligence agencies. In Nigeria, the national intelligence apparatus which consists of the Department of State Services (DSS), National Intelligence Agency (NIA), and Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA) faces ongoing criticism for its perceived failures to tackle threats such as terrorism, banditry, kidnapping, armed robbery, and insurgency. Nigeria's persistent security crisis is rooted in a blend of deeply embedded corruption, frequent mismanagement within security agencies, resource scarcity, and persistent political interference. These factors have collectively produced an environment in which the state's security apparatus is frequently inadequate or altogether absent. This fragmentation is emblematic of broader state failure, characterised by declining authority, eroding legitimacy, and diminishing capacity to protect citizens and maintain public order. State Failure Theory provides a useful framework for understanding Nigeria's complex challenges. It highlights the ways in which ongoing weaknesses in governance such as institutional breakdowns, failures in intelligence gathering, and cycles of escalating crime create feedback loops that intensify insecurity, further weaken state capacity, and undermine societal stability.

Method

This study employs a qualitative methodology within the interpretive paradigm. Such an approach is particularly apt for examining complex social phenomena like Nigeria's patterns of crime and persistent intelligence failures issues that defy reduction to quantitative data. This paper draws exclusively from secondary sources, including peer-reviewed journals, government publications, reputable news media, and authoritative international reports on Nigeria's security sector. Each source is subject to critical analysis, with a focus on identifying major themes, persistent ambiguities, and points of contradiction regarding intelligence dysfunction. The study's goal is exploratory and analytical: to clarify the fundamental drivers behind intelligence failures and to explore their relationship to the spread of criminal activity across the country. Specific crimes of interest include terrorism, kidnapping, and armed robbery, with attention paid to connections between these patterns and the functioning (or dysfunction) of Nigeria's security and intelligence sector. Key cross-cutting issues for exploration include institutional weaknesses, agency rivalry, political interference, and corruption, all of which feed into the cycle of insecurity. Data was collected through rigorous review of the relevant literature and existing documentation. Examining these materials offers insight into how security institutions in Nigeria operate including the constraints impeding their counter-crime efforts. The study employs thematic analysis to organise findings by category, focusing on critical issues within intelligence failure and the broader evolution of crime and insecurity in the Nigerian context.

Empirical studies from 2009 to 2024, examined the upsurge of insurgency, banditry and kidnapping in Nigeria. Members of Boko Haram pictured over the last 36 months, a period which has seen an unprecedented increase in security challenges faced by Nigeria, ranging from the Boko Haram insurgency to the swelling of wave of violent crime in the northern and western areas of the country.

Discussion

The study concludes that intelligence failure is crucial to crime escalation in Nigeria. "Crime, most especially terrorism, kidnapping, armed robbery, and banditry have taken firm root in Nigeria and the persistent failure of our intelligence community to thwart and contain these crimes strongly supports this assertion. There are various intelligence agencies in the country like the State Security Service (SSS), National Intelligence Agency (NIA) and Nigeria Police Force Intelligence Bureau (NPF-IB) yet, the security unrest in the country is persistently on the rise with catastrophic effect.

One of the most remarkable findings of this research is the disgraceful nature systemic intelligence failure. The Nigerian intelligence services are underfunded, lack ICT equipment, and have very few experts. Intelligence, in any case, cannot be collected, processed and analysed in time and security institutions are not able to timely respond pre-emptively to new threats. Moreover, sharing of intelligence between the agencies is sporadic and the collected information gets withheld by rival inter-agencies for political patronage and other institutional reasons. This failure to cooperate among agencies results in lost opportunities for intervention to suppress criminal conduct.

Another significant revelation is on political interference in intelligence activities. (Feb 2000, MWM) "Politicisation: The intelligence and national security bureaucracy is politically polarised organisation in which hiring, terminations, resource allocation, and policy making concerning the intelligence community are put at the disposal of political reasons rather than technical competence. This also weakens the intelligence process and contributes to the fragmentation of the security organisations. Compounding the problem is corruption deep within law enforcement agencies including robbery and racketeering, and information itself being traded for personal benefit.

The consequences of these intelligence lapses are profoundly concerning. Communities across Nigeria continue to endure violent assaults, mass abductions, and incidents of communal unrest, all unfolding with a noticeable absence of timely intervention by security forces. Incidents like the kidnappings of schoolchildren in Chibok and Dapchi serve as stark examples, underscoring the grave outcomes that emerge when intelligence fails and preventative measures are lacking.
It is apparent from recent events that these are not isolated cases, they point to a pattern of declining governance and eroding public trust in the government's capacity to ensure security.

Recommendations

Considering the scale of Nigeria's criminal threats, it's essential to rethink current policy. Priority should be given to significantly enhancing funding for intelligence agencies. Adequately addressing crime and insurgency isn't possible without realistic financial support. Upgrading technological capacity is equally pressing. Hence, investing in modern equipment such as drones, satellite surveillance, and artificial intelligence would expand intelligence-gathering capabilities considerably. The study recommends enhanced intelligence sharing, continuous training and capacity building for security personnel, improved technological support and greater utilisation of community-based intelligence as strategies for combating criminality and strengthening national security.

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