

## PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF THE CIVIL-MILITARY AND HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN NORTH-EASTERN NIGERIA

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### **Abstract**

*This article explores public attitudes towards civil-military relations and human rights violations in northeastern Nigeria, a region badly afflicted by the ongoing insurgency and conflict involving Boko Haram and other armed groups. This research may cover such aspects as the perception of local communities on Nigerian military and counterinsurgency operations, human rights implications of military actions and civil-military relations or trust between civilian volunteers and armed forces. Recognizing the tension that exists between national security and citizens' rights, this article discusses some of the core issues — military deployments to civilian areas with a focus on deaths of civilians, internal displacement of civilians, arbitrary arrests and several other allegations surrounding these violations of human rights. This paper reflects perspectives from various stakeholders — local civilians, internally displaced persons (IDPs), human rights organizations and armed forces personnel. It is inarguable that military presence is needed for security, yet there are fears over the heavy-handed elements of UNSCR 1973 which often increase civilian suffering. This paper adopts a form-oriented theory of structural functionalism, which suggested that social phenomena belong to a domain – or level – of existence separate from psychical and biological facts using qualitative approach. From this perspective, the paper concludes its discussion by contributing to our understanding of the broader consequences of civil-military relations in zones of armed substitute and develop brazen intercontinental policy reform that promotes human right, accountability and community involvement. It is a new way of planning military operations; one that recognizes that while there are legitimate security needs, it should not come at the expense of providing citizens with their fundamental rights and freedoms, creating opportunities for better trust and collaboration between communities in northeastern Nigeria and the state.*

**Keywords:** *Displacement, Conflict Zone, Civilian Trust, Military Operations, Counterinsurgency, Military Accountability*

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### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Since 2009, terrorism has led to an outbreak of massive violence in northeastern Nigeria. Among the numerous security challenges in the region, terrorist activities led by the Boko Haram crises had dominated all other crises in the region. The group which started as a

sectarian movement for propagating Islamic cause suddenly metamorphosed into a violent group which has perpetuated untold havoc (Onuoha, 2019). According to the International Institute of Strategic Studies, in its annual publication "Armed Conflict Survey" (2023), Boko Haram claims an average death of 3000 people yearly and a total death of 350,000 at the dawn of 2022. Most scholars put this figure above and some faulted the estimate pointing out that most records are done through newspaper mapping because of the terrain and also due to the poor data policy of the federal government in keeping records of the Boko haram attacks (Ugwueze, 2024). Despite the loss of human lives, the activities of Boko Haram have led to unprecedented economic and material loss in the northeast. According to the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), General Lucky Irabor, revealed that the Boko Haram insurgency led to the death of 100,000 persons, displaced over two million, and caused damages worth \$9 billion (N3.24 trillion) (The Guardian, 19th Oct 2022).

The operation safe corridor was designed as an exit program for Boko Haram fighters (Kurtzer and Anyadike, 2022). The operation safe corridor has a secret Nigeria military operation in conjunction with the Nigeria Department of State Service called the Sulhu program. The safe corridor has generally been designed as a Deconstructing, Disarmament, and Reconciliation (DDR) Program. The program was targeted to deradicalize junior Boko Haram fighters while the *Sulhu* was designed to target High Value Targets (HVT) or senior members of the Boko Haram terrorists (Kurtzer & Anyadike, 2022). This response by the Nigerian military was designed for peace-building in the crisis-ridden areas of the northeast.

Most of the Nigerian military programs for peace-building in the northeast were devoid of civil-military relations and bred human rights abuses on a wide scale. According to Adenrele (2012), the failure to incorporate civilians in peace-building operations made civilians keep against programs like the safe corridor as repented Boko Haram fighters under the scheme were rejected in the community. Other combinations like the use of the Civilian task force led to human rights abuses.

According to Section 32 of the 1999 constitution, the military was established to checkmate external aggressions. The use of the military for peace-building operations has been marred by cases of human rights violations because they are ill-trained for it. In most developed countries like the United States military campaigns or exercises are held outside the border with the core objective of determining how prepared the military were to protect the state but in Nigeria, military campaigns are launched to take care or in the face of internal security crises pave way

for such campaigns to be marred by human rights violations. The prolonged conflict between the Nigerian military and the Boko Haram insurgency in the North-Eastern region of the country has been a major source of concern regarding civil-military relations and the protection of human rights.

The Boko Haram insurgency, which began in 2009, has resulted in a significant humanitarian crisis, with widespread displacement, destruction of infrastructure, and loss of lives. In response, the Nigerian government has deployed the military to combat the terrorist threat, leading to an intensification of the conflict in the North-East. However, the conduct of military operations has been marred by numerous allegations of human rights violations, including extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrests, torture, and forced disappearances.

These alleged abuses by the Nigerian military have eroded public trust and undermined the legitimacy of the state's counterinsurgency efforts. The deteriorating civil-military relations have further exacerbated the suffering of the civilian population, who are caught in the crossfire between the military and the insurgents. This situation raises critical questions about the ability of the Nigerian government to protect the human rights of its citizens while addressing the security challenges in the North-East.

The continued human rights abuses by the military undermine the government's constitutional mandate to uphold the rule of law and safeguard the fundamental rights of its citizens. Secondly, the erosion of civil-military trust and the perceived lack of accountability for abuses can fuel resentment among the local population, potentially contributing to the growth of the insurgency and further destabilizing the region. Thirdly, the failure to address these issues could have broader implications for Nigeria's democratic consolidation and its international reputation as a responsible actor in the global community.

Adopting a qualitative approach to the study of international relations, the paper examines the human rights framework guiding peace operations of the military in conflict zones in northeastern Nigeria. This paper is categorized into three sections. The first section is the introduction, and the application of the theory. The second section deals with the review of relevant literature, and the last part of the paper is the discussion of the perception of civil-military relations, then possible conclusion and recommendations.

## **2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This paper adopts the theory of structural functionalism which was propounded by Radcliffe-Brown as against functionalism developed by Weber, Tarcott Pearson. This school developed in the 1890s around the work of Emile Durkheim who argued that "social phenomena constitute a domain, or order, of reality that is independent of psychological and biological facts. As per this sociological school, social phenomena must be explained in terms of other social phenomena, and not by reference to psychological needs (Silliotte, et al, 2021).

Radcliffe-Brown focused on the conditions under which social structures are maintained. He also believed that certain laws regulate the functioning of societies. He also modified the idea of need and replaced it with necessary conditions for the existence of human societies and these conditions can be discovered by proper scientific inquiry. He argued that the organic analogy should be used carefully. In a biological organism, the functioning of any organ is termed the activity of that organ. But in a social system, the continuity of structure is maintained by the process of social life. In Radcliffe-Brown's concept of function, the notion of structure is involved (Hansen, 2022).

This structure involves several constituent unit entities which maintain the continuity of social structure. Both Bronislaw Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown released their books in 1922, a year deemed "the year of wonders of Functionalism" (*annus mirabilis*) due to their substantial study. 'The Andaman Islanders' by A.R. Radcliffe-Brown and 'Argonauts in the Western Pacific' by Bronislaw Malinowski were published in 1922.

Attributes of Social Life Framework: The following structural aspects of social life, as articulated by A.R. Radcliffe-Brown: Existence of social groups: The social structure include family, clan, moieties, social sanctions, totemic groupings, social classes, caste groups, kinship systems, and other social groups. The social structural phenomenon focuses on the relationships among these groupings. The group's internal structure: various groupings have distinct internal structures. A family consists of the ties among the mother, father, and children. Classification: These categories are classed and assigned to social strata. For instance, the caste system in India and the economic classes in Western nations. Social Distinctions: There are caste, authority, and economic differences, as well as the social separation between distinct classes based on sex. For instance, the Brahmins and Shudras are socially distinct in India. The configuration of persons in a dyadic relationship: a master-servant dynamic exemplifies such

a link. Interaction between groups and individuals: social processes like cooperation, conflict, accommodations, etc., are instances of interaction between individuals, whereas war between countries is an example of interaction between groups (Stein & Leineweber, 2021).

Once again utilizing biology, Radcliffe-Brown establishes the relationship between structure and function. An organism's structure is made up of the well-organized arrangements of its components, each of which helps to interact with the others. In a similar line, social structure is a structured formation of persons and groups. People play a function in the structure of social organisms and society. The linkages that exist between social structure and social life are known as social function. Social structure should be explored by looking at how the functions that make up society are ordered, not by evaluating the qualities of individual group members. He goes on to suggest that an organism's components' relationships with one another are dynamic. The main principle underlying an organism is that, if it is alive, understanding its structure—the interactions between its parts—must be initiated by examining how it operates and the processes that preserve it that way. Structure and function are logically related in all organism types, with the exception of the dead one. As a consequence, structure and function are logically connected, support one another, and are vital to the continuation of the other. The way a community's social structure operates may be regarded as its social life (Stein & Leineweber, 2021).

For instance, the purpose of regular events like a funeral ceremony or the sentencing of offenders is to contribute to the maintenance of structural continuity by playing a part in social life overall. Radcliffe-Brown contends that the difference between structure and function is significant because it may be used to evaluate both processes of change and continuities in social life forms. He argues that separate products may have equivalent uses and that similar things may have unique cultural implications. They have a comparable social function even if they have diverse meanings and purposes (Stein & Leineweber, 2021).

### **3. OVERVIEW OF CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS IN NIGERIA**

Infractions and friction have plagued the relationship between people and their military counterparts throughout Africa; suffice it to say that what was once the 'feared' force defending the populace from outside aggression has changed with time. Alemika (2018) hypothesized that colonial military forces were used for raids and punitive expedition against rebellious tribes and rulers, resulting in a history of dread and mistrust among citizens and the military, in

locating the root of this anomaly. Thus, with decades of military rule in Nigeria, the existence of strong authoritarian imprint on civil life was inevitable and one that requires strategies to be developed to engineer a cultivation of civic virtue in advancing democracy (Oyewole, 2020).

Many African nations, including Nigeria, have had protracted periods of military rule, which have been marked by violent coup d'états and alleged human rights abuses brought on by the military's intrusion into politics. The 1990s saw a continuous reduction in military rule and a shift away from authoritarian rule to democratic governance throughout the continent. Civil-military relations are still tense in many African countries, notwithstanding growing democratization. The military was not fundamentally reformed or reoriented by post-colonial authorities to suit the expected roles in a democratic society and play its own part in defending the precepts, despite the fact that this was happening despite the democratization (Yaya, 2021).

The history of a 30-year military dictatorship contaminated with claims of human rights crimes by the Armed Forces is at the basis of the mistrust between citizens and the military, as is the situation in Nigeria. However, with Nigeria's return to democracy in 1999 and in response to international events after the end of the Cold War, the discussion of contemporary civil military relations has started to take center stage in global national security plans and conversation. In Nigeria, coordinated efforts by successive governments to modernize the military and prioritize concerns about civil-military relations progressively established themselves as the norm. There are initiatives underway to re-educate, professionalize, and offer the military an apolitical national perspective (Yaya, 2021).

In terms of policy direction, the desire to promote friendly civil-military relations at the national level has spawned national security policies with elements on civil-military relations by succeeding democratic governments; all in an effort to integrate real civil-military relations into the core of security governance. In addition to the government's efforts, the Nigerian Armed Forces and the general public are engaged in a number of public confidence-building activities to open up channels for communication, trust, and accountability. The North East of Nigeria may be the region where the demand for civil-military interaction is the greatest. The ongoing insurgency led by the Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awatiwal-Jihad organization has resulted in the military's enduring presence in civilian life. Soldiers in close proximity to people may also be seen in other regions of the nation where military operations are currently underway. The tight ties between the military and civilians in these regions have an impact on both national security and civil-military relations in Nigeria (Musa, Heinecken, 2022).

The military is a crucial institution of the contemporary state. Its importance to the development of the country cannot be overstated or disregarded. Despite the military's primary function, interactions with civilians have been a key source of worry. The military has a history of using violence against citizens and wanting to overthrow civilian governments with the slightest oversight. The military has manipulated politics in other African nations as well as Nigeria by having access to weapons of violence. Human rights violations in Nigeria throughout the different military administrations strained ties between the civilian and military populations. The term "civil-military relation" refers to any contacts and relationships between the military (Enyiazu, Madueke, & Mbaegbu, 2022).

Armed forces members having access to weapons of violence implies that the military has always been a major and significant element in the democratic system. This does not imply that the military is expected to engage in direct political intervention, but rather that they have a crucial role to play in the maintenance of democratic administration. Since the army overthrew Nigeria's democratically elected government on January 15th, 1966, the nation has seen more military control than democratic governments. In a state, civil-military ties can be in any shape. The first is that, like any other pressure group, military commanders can use their legal authority to exert pressure on the civilian government in order to accomplish goals like larger budgets. The military may be able to have a significant impact on policy as an interest group, but this power is constrained by the understanding that it cannot overturn a decision made by the civilian government. Second, military personnel might utilize threats of sanctions or extortion to further their objectives. This only applies in principle as any threat made by the Nigerian military against the civilian administration is punishable by death (Enyiazu, Madueke, & Mbaegbu, 2022).

Third, a civilian administration may be ousted by the military and replaced with another civilian government, claims Finer. If the previous civilian administration does not perform its national responsibility, then this may occur. The military officers may choose to topple a civilian administration and assume control of the state's activities, according to Finer, who also recognized another relationship between the two. As an entity that can utilize coercion and force to further a state aim in terms of defense, it has given rise to significant worry. The question is how, in light of the military's training in violence, civilian authority over it can be maintained.

Huntington (1957) divided the procedures and techniques used by civilians to manage the military into "objective" and "subjective" mechanisms. The objective mechanism is a type of relationship in which the political and military tasks and responsibilities are clearly separated. The main goal of this strategy is to keep the military as far away from politics as is practical. The military, on the other hand, is technically subservient to civil authorities, according to the subjective system, and as such, it has no right to question civil authority. The ideological control is highlighted by the subjective and objective civilian control, which will ultimately enhance the civilian authority. In essence, the subjective and objective framework contends that an ideological military will regard itself as a professional rather than a political force. Desch (1999) examined the exercise of civilian control over the military by delving into the structural theory of civil-military relations, which asserts that the degree of internal and foreign danger the state faces determines whether civilian control is strong or weak. In this situation, a nation that is up against a potent foreign foe would want to guarantee that its military is highly strong and that it participates in decision-making (Musa & Heinecken, 2022).

The civil-military relationship is impacted in either case. It should be understood, nonetheless, that regardless of its capabilities, the military remains politically active under civilian authority. Fever (2003) used the principal-agent theory to explain the relationship between the civil and military. According to his analysis, the civilian hired the military. As a result, it is anticipated that the civilian, who serves as the principal, would be able to exert the greatest amount of influence over the military, who serves as the agent. As a result, there is an employment connection present. The employee is required to carry out his designated task in accordance with the conditions established. Regarding the constitutional functions of the military, a state's civil-military relations will be influenced by a variety of circumstances.

### **3.1 Factors Influencing Civil-Military Relations in Northeastern Nigeria**

Civil-military relations in Northeastern Nigeria are influenced by a complex interplay of factors, including the ongoing insurgency by Boko Haram, socio-economic conditions, political dynamics, and historical legacies. The region has been a hotspot for conflict, necessitating military intervention and impacting the relationship between the civilian population and military forces.



- a. Insurgency and Security Challenges:** The insurgency led by Boko Haram since 2009 has significantly shaped civil-military relations in Northeastern Nigeria. The group's violent activities, including bombings, kidnappings, and territorial control, have necessitated a substantial military presence in the region. According to Okereke and Okafor (2020), the military's role in counterinsurgency operations has led to a complex dynamic where the military is both a protector and, at times, a perpetrator of human rights abuses, creating tension with the local population.
- b. Human Rights Violations:** Human rights violations by the military, including extrajudicial killings, arbitrary detentions, and torture, have strained relations with civilians. Reports by Amnesty International (2020) detail numerous incidents where the Nigerian military has been accused of severe human rights abuses during operations against Boko Haram. These actions have undermined trust and fueled resentment among the local communities.
- c. Socio-Economic Conditions:** The socio-economic conditions in Northeastern Nigeria, characterized by poverty, unemployment, and underdevelopment, have also influenced civil-military relations. The region's economic marginalization has exacerbated grievances and contributed to the recruitment of individuals into Boko Haram. Eme et al. (2014) argue that improving socio-economic conditions is crucial for fostering better civil-military relations and achieving long-term peace and stability in the region.
- d. Political Dynamics and Governance:** Political dynamics and governance issues play a critical role in shaping civil-military relations. The Nigerian government's approach to addressing the insurgency, including the implementation of security measures and policies, affects how the military is perceived by civilians. Poor governance, corruption, and lack of accountability have often led to ineffective responses to the insurgency, further complicating the relationship between the military and civilians (Iyekekpolo, 2020).
- e. Community Engagement and Civil Society:** Community engagement and the role of civil society are vital in influencing civil-military relations. Efforts by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and local leaders to mediate between the military and civilians have been crucial in building trust and cooperation. Programs aimed at

fostering dialogue, understanding, and collaboration between the military and local communities have shown promise in improving relations (Omole et al., 2015).

#### **4. HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES AND CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS IN NORTHEASTERN NIGERIA**

Human rights abuses have profoundly impacted civil-military relations in Northeastern Nigeria, particularly in the context of the ongoing insurgency led by Boko Haram. The region has witnessed significant military operations aimed at countering this extremist group, which have, unfortunately, been marred by numerous allegations of human rights violations. These abuses have strained the relationship between the civilian population and military forces, complicating efforts to restore peace and stability. Outlined below are the nature of these human rights abuses, their impact on civil-military relations, and the broader implications for security and governance in the region.

##### **4.1 Nature of Human Rights Abuses**

The Nigerian military has been accused of various human rights violations in its counterinsurgency operations against Boko Haram. These abuses include extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrests, torture, and forced disappearances. Reports by Human Rights Watch (2019) and Amnesty International (2020) detail incidents where military personnel have allegedly engaged in excessive use of force and brutal treatment of detainees. For instance, Amnesty International (2020) documented cases of civilians being detained in overcrowded and unsanitary conditions without trial for extended periods, sometimes leading to death due to lack of medical care.

##### **4.2 Impact on Civil-Military Relations**

These human rights abuses have severely damaged the trust and cooperation between the civilian population and the military in Northeastern Nigeria. The perception of the military as both a protector and a perpetrator of violence has created a complex and often adversarial relationship. According to Okereke and Okafor (2020), the lack of accountability for military abuses has fueled resentment and fear among civilians, undermining the effectiveness of military operations and local support for counterinsurgency efforts.

## **5. PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF THE CIVIL-MILITARY AND HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN NORTH-EASTERN NIGERIA**

This section focus on the strategies and initiatives facilitates the combating conflicts and crises in the northeastern part of Nigeria, which are considered to be the strategies for military to restore peace, but people's perception on these strategies signifies the elements of human rights abuse. They included:

### **5.1 The use of Civil-Military Joint Task Force**

The joint task force (JTF) operation against the Boko Haram insurgency is a such of military operation in the northeast that is marred with numerous human rights abuses. Even though Nigeria is a ratified signatory to most of the international convention on human rights, local law in chapter four of the 1999 constitution upheld the rights of people especially those rights that are given to any human on the bases of being a human. Tar, and Bala (2021), observed that the above provision notwithstanding, the members of the JTF deployed to the Northeast has become infamously enmeshed in an orgy of human rights abuses. Nigerian security agents have a long record of human rights abuses, including extra-judicial killings of criminal suspects in custody (Amnesty International, 2009; Human Rights Watch, 2005). They (Tar and Bala) continued that; the Nigerian police are the cause of the most violent death in Nigeria. This is typified by the recurrent incidents of human rights violations credited to the JTF. The JTF has been implicated in several human rights abuses that could be narrowed down to detention-related abuses, extra-judicial killings, and torture. In the testimony of the above; Human Rights Watch (2012) noted that most of these abuses occur mostly the cause of raids in communities, often in the aftermath of Boko Haram attacks, members of the security forces have executed men in front of their families; arbitrarily arrested or beaten members of the community; burned houses, shops, and cars; stolen money while searching homes; and. raped women. Government security agencies routinely hold suspects incommunicado without charge or trial in secret detention facilities and have subjected detainees to torture or other physical abuse (Tar, & Bala, 2021).

It has supposedly backed the sect's assertion that they kill security officials in revenge for the claimed torture and arbitrary imprisonment of police officers, the prosecution of its members, and the summary execution of Mohammed Yusuf and other sect members. Accordingly, Human Rights Watch (2019) states that Boko Haram has targeted government security

agencies, notably the police, its major target since 2009. The group has assaulted defenseless off-duty officers on the street, in barracks, and while drinking in pubs. It has also shot and assassinated active-duty police officers in police stations, roadblocks, government buildings, and churches. The use of suicide bombers and improvised explosive devices to assault police facilities has been linked to Boko Haram. Additionally, the gang has assaulted automobiles, checkpoints, and military locations, notably those belonging to the Joint Military Task Force (JTF) in Maiduguri.

In addition to extrajudicially executing accused members of Boko Haram, the JTF has been tied to serious human rights breaches. Soldiers have burnt automobiles, residences, and businesses during incursions into areas. They have also arbitrarily imprisoned local guys and, in certain circumstances, murdered them in front of their homes or businesses. Growing enmity amongst communities is one outcome of this gross human rights violation in the region. As a consequence, individuals in the community are less likely to volunteer information that may assist halt the spread (Human Rights Watch, 2019).

In a similar vein, the public and the government are now farther apart as a consequence of the alienation of the ordinary people. The entire circumstance is now perilous as a consequence of this. Without being cordial with the host population, it is practically impossible to stop the insurgency. Furthermore, the JTF has been tied to abuses including detention. Numerous accused sect members have been jailed for months or even years without being prosecuted or given a chance to defend themselves. The opportunity to interact with their lawyers and families is routinely denied to these detainees. The bulk of them have not been charged in public. One big concern with Nigeria's criminal justice system is the duration of pre-trial imprisonment. Nigeria has been beset by various internal security challenges. In addition to breaching human rights, varied internal security challenges result in varying degrees of casualties. The number of fatalities due to Nigeria's primary internal security challenges is depicted in the chart below (Ogye & Smah, 2024).

## **5.2 Operation BOYONA and Human Rights Abuses**

The preceding security situation in the country that necessitated the operation was the raising wave of insurgency as a result of the Boko Haram activities, Nigeria Army (2013) The operation BOYONA was launched in May 2013 with a total number of 10,000 troops. It kicked off when the state of emergency was declared in those three states and was meant to tackle

insurgency in the northeast. During this operation, the major human rights violated were the economic, cultural, and civil rights while the major violators were the two parties in the conflicts; the Nigeria security forces and the Boko haram terrorist organization (Musa & Heinecken, 2022).

Among all the rights violated by the military during this operation, the most abused rights were civil rights. This is because both actors in the conflict played an enormous role in the violation of these rights especially towards noncombatants. As regards the violation of civil rights violated by the Nigerian security forces during Operation BOYONA, the breakdown of civil rights violated is; extrajudicial or summary execution/ death in custody due to denial of life-saving treatment to detainees, unlawful detention, torture, and forced disappearance. For the sake of clarity, the researcher quantified and put into the chart to depict the extent of the violation of the component of the civil rights of the citizens in the three states where Operation BOYONA was conducted. The figures used in constructing this histogram were extracted from the Amnesty International report "Stars on their shoulders, blood on their hands" (Mallam, 2019).

More than 1,400 people have been killed at the Giwa and Mai Malari barracks in Maiduguri, the Multinational JTF facility in Mile 4, Baga, Sector Alpha ("Guantanamo"), Presidential Lodge in Damaturu, the JTF base ("Rest House") in Potiskum (Yobe State), and 23 Brigade Barracks in Yola (Adamawa State), according to Amnesty International (2014). Therefore, it is vital to recall that the Nigerian security force has either directly or indirectly been accountable for the bulk of the homicides that take place in the jail facilities. Some hostages were executed, according to a report from the same human rights organization, while others were permitted to death from hunger or other ailments. The Nigeria Right Watch (2014) noted that some individuals suffer in order to die, which contributes to support and explain this assertion. Starvation, thirst, high overcrowding that enabled illnesses to spread, torture, denial of medical treatment, and the use of fumigation chemicals in unventilated cells were the leading causes of death in detention facilities (Mallam, 2019).

Various killings of detainees in detention centers situated throughout the Northeast have been traced to the Nigerian Security Forces (Ifejika & Ojo, 2024). According to Ifejika and Ojo, over 7,000 men and boys lost their life in detention camps in March 2011. According to Amnesty International (2014), Giwa Barracks had the largest death rate in May, June, and July of 2013, with roughly 180 recorded fatalities. The United Nations High Commissioner for

Human Rights pointed out that detainees in the aforementioned detention facilities were denied food and water and kept in overcrowded conditions, which led to deaths, even though the Amnesty International report's issue is the difficulty of verifying the data presented about the actual number of deaths that have occurred under the watch of the Nigerian security forces. It has been noted that the government's security forces in the Northeast have carried out a number of atrocious and horrible extrajudicial murders and killings. Of the events that were reported, at least 27 happened between 2012 and 2014. International Amnesty These incidences resulted in the deaths of at least 1,200 men and boys. In flagrant violation of international humanitarian law (IHL), these people were slain by Nigerian Security Forces after being apprehended and while they posed no threat (Ibukun, 2020).

### **5.3 The Joint Task Force and Human Rights Violations**

Civil-military relation is key to all peacebuilding missions. For every peacebuilding mission to succeed, the cooperation of all the organs of the government plus the host community corporation is needed to drive home the goals of civil-military relations. The executive and the legislature help provide effective coordination. The executives approve the deployment of the military for peace operations, with the approval of the legislature as enshrined in section 217 as it relates to the deployment of the military in combat duty outside Nigeria. The legislature is equally needed to provide effective legal backing to the activities of the military. In scenarios where the military has neglected these laws human rights violations always eschews (Moorthy, et al, 2020).

Community engagement is ideal for the success of all military operations. The lack of community engagement in peacebuilding in the northeast has marred several efforts of the military. For instance, Deconstructing Disarmament and Reconciliation Programs in Northeast Nigeria have been carried out through operation safe corridors and *Sulhu* failed to reintegrate the repented Boko haram members into the community because of the lack of host community engagement. The Ibukun (2020) pointed out that the absence of community interaction and discourse is a fundamental failure of both *Sulhu* and Operation Safe Corridor. Because of public outcry, numerous state governments have rejected resettling males who have come under Operation Safe Corridor. Fighters are reintegrating with the local people in *Sulhu*. However, owing to the atrocities they performed, they are unable to return to particular regions. Thus, they are pleased to stay in metropolitan settings where they are fairly anonymous.

However, once again, neither transitional justice nor forgiveness have been present (Ogunniran, 2021).

#### **5.4 Mistrust between civilians and the military**

The continual violation of human rights by the military during peacebuilding has led to mistrust between the military and the civilians. This mistrust has affected most military operations most often the support the military needed from the civilians to ensure the success of military operations is not given. This support, especially from host communities, is given through technical and intelligent information. Past civilian experiences from the military due to mass arrest and summary execution as recorded by Amnesty International report (2019) have made it impossible for the military to get such technical support without placing a bounty or paying for them due to negative image it gives to the military.

For instance, after the plethora of military coups in Nigeria, the Nigerian politicians, and populace dread all forms of military encroachment in the public lives of the citizens. Another glaring example is the failure of operation "know your neighborhood" that the military developed in the northeast to track foreigners working for Boko Haram in the northeast. The operation was partly successful because of the strand relationship between the military and the civilians. Also, the operation safe corridor and the Sulhu program that the military developed to reintegrate the local populations back into the community were kicked against by host communities because of the distrust between the civilians and the military (Hansen, 2020).

#### **5.5 Lack of community support for the military operations**

Another implication of human rights abuse in civil-military relations is the lack of support among the arms of the government for the programs of the military. The three arms of the government have a role to play in civil-military relations and also peacebuilding. While the executives develop and approve the policy framework for peacebuilding, the legislation gives it legal backing through the approval of funds or law enactment (Ogunniran, 2021). The judiciary ensures that those laws will be strictly adhered to. The international embargo on arms supply: Human rights abuse or neglect of civil-military relations leads to all forms of international boycott, arms embargo on the military, and sales of equipment which will impede the fights against insurgents in the northeast. For instance, the United States and the United Kingdom have several placed an arms embargo on the sale of arms to Nigeria and her military due to human rights abuses and neglect of civil-military relations by her military. This has been

instituted by the senate of both countries in response to the Nigerian military's alleged human rights abuse. According to Punch Newspaper publication on 13th August 2021, the United States government placed an arms embargo on Nigeria because of military human rights abuse. this was not the first time since the military keep building in the northeast as other instances exist. similarly, on 29th October 2021, the United Kingdom placed Trade sanctions, arms embargoes, and other trade restrictions. this move has impacted Nigeria's security and its ability to maintain internal security as Nigeria depends on imported arms to defend itself (Ogunniran, 2021).

## **6. CONCLUSION**

The government and local communities in the affected area have reacted to the ongoing internal security situation in the northeast in a variety of ways. A typical approach was for the Nigerian military to deploy a peacekeeping force to the afflicted zone. Through particular third-party interactions with multiple actors carrying out diverse roles concurrently or at different periods, peacebuilding is a dynamic approach and framework for improving constructive peace. In order to "prevent the house from catching on fire," proactive peacebuilding would need third-party interveners to attempt to carry out an intervention prior to a conflict. In order to address the fundamental causes of conflict, from prevention to resolution to transformation, comprehensive peacebuilding is commonly conducted for regional and global governance. The Nigerian police were originally supposed to respond to the issue from the onset. The military was called in under the MACA (Military Assistance to Civilian Authority) concept when it became evident that the police's training and equipment were insufficient for serious circumstances. To tackle the challenges, the military carried out a number of peacebuilding operations. The Nigerian military pursued many measures, which were designed to foster regional peace. The military launched a variety of operations aimed at establishing peace in the region, but the most notable of them was Operation Safe Corridor.

The operation safe corridor was designed as an exit program for Boko Haram fighters. The operation safe corridor has a secret Nigeria military operation in conjunction with the Nigeria Department of State Service called the Sulhu program. The safe corridor has generally been designed as Deconstructing, Disarmament, and Reconciliation (DDR) Program. The program was targeted to deradicalize junior Boko haram fighters while the Sulhu was designed to target to High Valued Targets (HVT) or senior members of the Boko haram terrorists. This response



by the Nigerian military was designed for peace-building in the crisis-ridden areas of the northeast.

Most of the Nigerian military programs for peace-building in the northeast were devoid of civil-military relations and bred human rights abuses on a wide scale. The failure to incorporate civilians in peace-building operations made civilians keep against programs like the safe corridor as repented Boko haram fighters under the scheme were rejected in the community. Other combinations like the use of the Civilian task force led to human rights abuses.

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