

Cross–Border Crime and National Security in Nigeria

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Abstract

Cross-border crime constitutes a multidimensional threat to Nigeria's national security, undermining territorial integrity, economic stability, and human welfare. This study examines the scope, drivers, and consequences of cross-border criminal activities, including arms trafficking, drug smuggling, human trafficking, and transnational terrorism, through a dual theoretical lens that integrates Securitization Theory and the Critical Human Security Framework. Drawing on qualitative content analysis of policy documents, institutional reports, and recent scholarly literature (2015-2025), the research reveals that Nigeria's border insecurity is sustained by porous borders, institutional rivalry, systemic corruption, and socio-economic marginalization. Findings indicate that classic state responses, characterized by militarization, border closures, and securitized discourse, have yielded limited results because they neglect the human dimensions of security, including livelihoods, justice, community trust, and gender inclusion. The paper argues for a paradigm shift toward an integrated, people-centered model of border governance that harmonizes enforcement with community engagement, regional cooperation, and socio-economic empowerment. It concludes that sustainable national security in Nigeria depends not only on defending borders but also on securing the lives and dignity of the very citizens who inhabit them.

Keywords: Cross-Border Crime, National Security, Securitization, Human Security, Nigeria, Transnational Organized Crime.

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INTRODUCTION

Cross-border crime is one of the most complex threats to national security in Africa. It often erodes state sovereignty, economic stability, and community safety. In Nigeria, these crimes, which include arms trafficking, drug smuggling, human trafficking, and terrorism, exploit porous borders and weak governance structures. Furthermore, estimates suggest that out of roughly 640 million small arms worldwide, about 8 million circulate within West Africa (as cited in Fagge, et al, 2021, drawing on Abdulkareem, 2012; Adetula, 2015). This represents a challenge to regional security and stability. With 4,477 kilometers of land borders and an 853-kilometer coastline shared with Benin, Niger, Chad, and Cameroon, Nigeria's location makes it both a regional trade hub and a corridor for illicit flows (CIA World Factbook, 2023). Nigeria's borders—770 km with Benin, 1,500 km with Niger, 1,700 km with Cameroon, 90 km with Chad, and 850 km of maritime boundaries—have remained difficult to effectively police. Criminals increasingly exploit lagoons, creeks, and rivers for the trafficking of arms, drugs, and humans (Ikoh, 2012). These further complicate border surveillance and undermine state border management efforts.

Successive governments in Nigeria, with support from foreign governments and agencies, have proposed various measures such as e-border surveillance systems, participation in the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), and adherence to ECOWAS protocols on transnational crime. Yet crime at the borders persists, reflecting the ineffectiveness of these well-intentioned measures. Moreover, border management has remained largely manual, with fragmented coordination. Militarized responses often neglect the human dimensions of border insecurity. Core factors that are frequently overlooked are poverty, corruption, weak institutional capacity, and the missed opportunity to engage border communities in surveillance and intelligence gathering. (Dike, 2025). Addressing these gaps requires rethinking security as both a state and human concern.

Through the securitization theory and the critical human security framework, this study explores how Nigeria's political framing of border threats has shaped policy choices and outcomes. It argues that militarized strategies undermine deeper governance and institutional failures that perpetuate insecurity. The paper calls for an integrated, human-centered model of border governance that complements kinetic responses and surveillance with community participation, gender inclusion, and local development.

Nigeria's expansive land and maritime borders, stretching over 4,477 kilometers of terrestrial frontiers and 853 kilometers of coastline, have increasingly become channels for transnational criminal enterprises rather than corridors of legitimate trade and human exchange. Recently, frameworks recommend measures like e-surveillance systems, border closures, and participation in regional security mechanisms like the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF). Yet, weak implementation undermines these efforts, and cross-border crime continues to thrive (Dike, 2025). Similarly, the maritime boundaries, as noted by Ikoh (2012), provide cover for criminals to evade the law, even with increased patrols and technology

deployment. While the adoption of drones and electronic surveillance has been widely recommended for securing Nigeria's borders, sustaining such technology has proven difficult. Abiodun (2020) underscores that effective aerial surveillance in Nigeria requires not only modern equipment but also robust coordination among security agencies, adequate funding, and trained personnel. Without these enablers, even advanced systems risk underutilization or rapid breakdown.

These activities, such as arms trafficking from the Sahel, oil bunkering in the Niger Delta, human trafficking across the Cameroon corridor, and illicit trade along the Benin border, not only diminish state sovereignty but also destabilize local communities and their economies. As Agbebaku and Uwa (2022) argue, achieving effective border security under the ECOWAS Protocol requires a paradigm shift from reactive, militarized control to coordinated, technology-driven, and community-inclusive management across the sub-region. This reinforces the need for Nigeria's border governance approach to balance security imperatives with inclusive, cooperative regional strategies.

Current policy approaches remain heavily securitized and state-centric, prioritizing military containment over holistic governance and human development. This narrow framing masks deeper structural drivers like poverty, corruption, weak inter-agency coordination, and the historical legacies of colonial boundary imposition that enable criminal networks to thrive. Moreover, the exclusion of border communities from security planning and response has fostered distrust, reduced intelligence sharing, and inadvertently pushed vulnerable populations into illicit economies as a means of survival.

Therefore, there is a gap between Nigeria's stated national security objectives articulated in documents such as the National Security Policy (2019) and the National Border Management Strategy (2019-2023) and their operationalization. While these policies contain human security principles, real-life implementation remains anchored in coercion rather than collaboration.

The core question that this study seeks to answer includes the following: Why do Nigeria's cross-border security strategies persistently fail to achieve sustainable outcomes, and how can integrating human security imperatives into border governance transform this trajectory? By exploring this question through complementary theoretical lenses, the paper seeks to propose a more inclusive, effective, and resilient model of national security, one that protects both the state and its people. What are the nature, forms, and regional dynamics of cross-border crime affecting Nigeria? What socio-political, economic, and institutional factors drive the persistence of cross-border criminal activities along Nigeria's borders? How do cross-border crimes impact Nigeria's territorial integrity, national security, and human security? To what extent have existing institutional and policy responses, such as militarization, border closures, and regional cooperation, effectively addressed cross-border crime? How can an integrated, human-centered border governance framework enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of Nigeria's national security strategy?

Conceptual Clarifications

Key terms such as cross-border crime, transnational organized crime, national security, and border governance are central to this study. Clarifying them establishes a common analytical ground for examining how Nigeria's border challenges intersect with governance, development, and human security.

Cross-Border Crime

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC, 2010) defines cross-border crime as offenses whose inception, prevention, and effects involve more than one national jurisdiction. In West Africa, such crimes include arms trafficking, smuggling, human trafficking, terrorism financing, and money laundering.

Nigeria's colonial boundaries fragmented long-standing trade and kinship networks, converting legitimate mobility into illicit movement (Alemika, 2013). Today, over 1,400 unofficial entry points link communities that remain socially and economically interdependent (NIS, 2021). Weak governance, corruption, and poverty blur the line between survival-based smuggling and organized criminality. Arms trafficking from Libya and the Sahel has intensified insurgency in the North-East, while illegal oil trade in the South-South sustains a political economy of violence (Fagge et al., 2021; Adetula, 2015).

Cross-border crime thus represents both a symptom and a driver of Nigeria's governance crisis, thriving where state authority is weak and human insecurity is high.

National Security

Traditional conceptions of national security emphasize sovereignty, territorial integrity, and regime stability (Wolfer, 1952). Contemporary thinking, however, extends this to include human welfare and social justice (Buzan, 1991; UNDP, 1994). Nigeria's National Security Policy (NSP, 2019) aligns with this broader view, defining security as the protection of both the state and its people.

Yet in practice, Nigeria's implementation remains largely militarized, privileging state protection over citizen well-being (Alemika, 2013; Adetula, 2015). For instance, the 2019 border closure disrupted legitimate trade and livelihoods without dismantling smuggling networks (Gana et al., 2023).

In this study, national security is understood as a dual condition, the safety of both the state and its citizens. Therefore, achieving national security requires reconciling territorial defense with human development and society.

Theoretical Framework

Understanding cross-border crime in Nigeria requires a framework that captures both state security priorities and the human realities that sustain insecurity. The securitization theory and the critical human security theory were adopted for this study.

Securitization Theory

Developed by Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, and Jaap de Wilde (1998), Securitization Theory views security not as an objective condition but as a social construct. Issues become "security threats" when political actors frame them as existential threats requiring extraordinary measures. This process legitimizes exceptional actions such as militarization or border closure. In Nigeria, this framework explains how arms trafficking, terrorism, and irregular migration have been elevated from policing concerns to national emergencies. Political and policy discourse often frames border crimes in a manner that justifies military action as well as increased defense spending. This also leads to diminished roles played by civilian institutions

and community actors. (Dike, 2025; Gana et al., 2023). These measures protect the state but not necessarily the citizens.

While useful for revealing the politics behind security choices, securitization theory has limitations. It focuses on elite narratives and state-level action, neglecting how ordinary people experience insecurity. In Nigeria, this top-down framing has sometimes intensified human suffering, displacing border communities and deepening distrust in government. To address these blind spots, this study complements securitization analysis with a human-centered lens.

Critical Human Security Theory

The Human Security concept, popularized by the UNDP (1994) and advanced by Sen (2000) and Tadjbakhsh and Chenoy (2007), expands security beyond territorial defense to include freedom from fear, want, and indignity. Its critical variant goes further by examining how power, exclusion, and inequality shape insecurity.

Applied to Nigeria's border context, this framework highlights how poverty, corruption, and neglect drive people into illicit economies such as smuggling or trafficking (Fagge et al., 2021; Gana et al., 2023). It reframes the border problem from "protecting the state" to "protecting lives and livelihoods." Women, youth, and displaced persons in frontier areas often experience insecurity not only from criminals but also from coercive state actions.

Critics argue that "human security" is conceptually broad and difficult to operationalize (Paris, 2001), yet its value lies in connecting development, governance, and security. It urges policymakers to see border stability as inseparable from justice, inclusion, and opportunity.

Using both perspectives enables a more comprehensive understanding of Nigeria's border insecurity. Securitization theory exposes how the state constructs and responds to threats, while the Critical Human Security Framework uncovers the social and economic realities these responses overlook. Together, they show that Nigeria's border crisis is not only a failure of territorial control but also a breakdown of the social contract. Sustainable security, therefore, requires combining enforcement with empowerment and linking defense, governance, and human development.

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Cross-border crime thus represents both a symptom and a driver of Nigeria's governance crisis, thriving where state authority is weak and human insecurity is high.

Transnational Organized Crime (TOC)

While often used interchangeably with cross-border crime, TOC emphasizes the networked and systemic nature of criminal operations across multiple states. UNODC (2005) describes TOC as organized groups engaging in serious crimes for profit beyond national borders.

In Nigeria, such networks include drug cartels using West African routes, human trafficking rings targeting Europe, and arms smugglers operating through Niger and Chad. These networks are sustained by corruption, institutional complicity, and poverty (Dike, 2025; Ogbonnaya, 2020). The result is a “shadow economy of insecurity,” where criminality and governance intersect.

This study, therefore, treats TOC not merely as an illicit activity but as an embedded structure within Nigeria's political and economic systems, one that perpetuates insecurity while feeding off it.

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Border Governance

Border governance refers to the institutional, legal, and operational arrangements through which states regulate territorial boundaries while facilitating legitimate movement and trade. Nigeria's National Border Management Strategy (NBMS 2019-2023) and the ECOWAS Integrated Border Governance Framework (2016) both promote integrated management and community engagement.

However, implementation remains heavily securitized, with limited participation from local actors. A sustainable model must therefore link surveillance, technology, and enforcement

with community intelligence, livelihood support, and regional cooperation. This study adopts a human-centered definition of border governance, which involves coordinated management that ensures security while safeguarding the rights, welfare, and economic resilience of border populations.

The Nature of Cross-Border Crime in across Nigeria

Cross-border crime in Nigeria manifests differently across regions, reflecting diverse political economies and geography. The Nigeria Immigration Service (2024) reports that the country's 4,477 km of land borders and 853 km of coastline include more than 1,400 unmanned crossing points. These weakly monitored routes enable arms trafficking, smuggling, human trafficking, and illicit trade that undermine both state and human security (Gana et al., 2023). Furthermore, prevailing physical and ecological conditions like lagoons, creeks, and forest corridors foster criminal elements to outmaneuver established checkpoints, especially along the Southwestern and Southeastern borders (Ikoh, 2012).

- North-East and North-West: Arms smuggling from Libya and the Sahel continues to fuel insurgency and banditry (Fagge et al., 2021). Armed groups move easily between Nigeria, Niger, and Chad, exchanging weapons, fighters, and supplies despite military patrols (MNJTF, 2022).
- South-South: The region experiences oil bunkering, illegal refining, and piracy in the Gulf of Guinea. These activities cost billions in lost revenue and erode maritime sovereignty (NIMASA, 2023).
- South-West: Along the Benin and Ogun borders, smuggling of fuel, rice, and vehicles flourishes under informal networks often linked to local elites (NCS, 2023). These networks undermine customs revenue and formal trade.
- South-East: Human trafficking and small-scale arms trade are prevalent across the Cameroon border, with documented cases of forced migration and illicit logging routes through Cross River and Ebonyi (NAPTIP, 2023).

From a securitization theory lens, the Nigerian state tends to frame these varied issues uniformly as “existential threats,” leading to a militarized, one-size-fits-all response. Yet this approach ignores the regional diversity of drivers and community dynamics sustaining these crimes (Gana, Adamu, & Zakariya'u, 2023).

Cross-border crimes and territorial integrity:

Across the northern corridors, ungoverned spaces allow insurgent and criminal groups to operate with relative impunity, eroding Nigeria's sovereignty. In the South-South, maritime insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea demonstrates that territorial vulnerabilities extend to sea borders. Meanwhile, in the South-West and South-East, corruption and collusion among border agents weaken control, transforming borders into economic frontiers of crime.

The securitization perspective explains the persistence of these problems: state discourse emphasizes border protection but neglects the governance and legitimacy crises that weaken enforcement. Military deployments contain threats temporarily but fail to secure trust or cooperation from local populations.

Economic and Human Security Dimensions of Cross-border Crime

Cross-border crime carries profound economic and human consequences. Smuggling and oil theft cost the state over ₦500 billion annually (NCS, 2023) and distort domestic markets. In the North-East, violence and displacement have destroyed livelihoods and education systems. In the South-South, environmental degradation from illegal refining has worsened poverty and health outcomes. In the South-West and South-East, informal traders, especially women, face exploitation by both smugglers and law enforcement.

Through the Critical Human Security lens, these patterns show that insecurity persists where governance fails to address basic needs such as employment, justice, and inclusion. The border economy becomes a survival strategy, not merely a criminal enterprise.

Institutional and Governance Factors

Weak institutions and fragmented coordination mechanisms remain the common denominator across all regions. Customs, immigration, and security agencies often operate with overlapping mandates and limited information sharing (ECOWAS, 2020). On the other hand, political patronage sustains corruption, while community distrust undermines intelligence gathering. The 2019 border closure revealed these contradictions: while smuggling reduced briefly, legitimate economic livelihoods declined and informal networks adapted quickly (Gana et al., 2023).

Both theoretical lenses highlight this governance failure. Securitization focuses on controlling borders through force, while the human security framework stresses that sustainable protection arises from inclusion, legitimacy, and opportunity.

Regional and Maritime Dimensions of Cross-Border Crime:

Nigeria's border security is inseparable from regional dynamics. The ECOWAS free movement regime facilitates trade but also allows criminal networks to move easily. In the Sahel, state fragility fuels the circulation of arms and fighters, while in the Gulf of Guinea, Nigeria's limited naval capacity enables piracy and illegal oil exports (NIMASA, 2023).

These realities confirm that border management must combine national reform with regional cooperation, harmonizing surveillance, intelligence, and law enforcement frameworks under ECOWAS and AU platforms.

The paper discovered a consistent pattern; Nigeria's border crisis stems from the dominance of securitized state responses over human-centered strategies. Through securitization theory, we see how political framing elevates border insecurity to a national emergency, legitimizing militarized interventions across all zones. Yet, the critical human security perspective exposes why these measures fail. They overlook local economies, social resilience, and community trust.

Therefore, sustainable national security requires balancing territorial protection with human development. This means redefining security not merely as defending borders but as enabling stability, justice, and livelihoods within border communities, from the Sahel corridor to the Gulf of Guinea.

The Impact of Cross-Border Crime on Nigeria's National Security

The study identifies that cross-border crime poses a multidimensional threat to Nigeria's national security, affecting not only the state's territorial integrity but also its economic stability, human welfare, and governance systems. National security cannot be achieved solely through militarization; true security requires protecting citizens' lives, dignity, and livelihoods, not just defending territory.

Threat to Territorial Integrity and Sovereignty

- **Porous Borders:** With over 4,477 km of land borders and more than 1,400 unofficial crossing points (NIS, 2024), Nigeria's frontiers are highly vulnerable.
- **Ungoverned Spaces:** In regions like the North-East and North-West, criminal and insurgent groups, including Boko Haram, ISWAP, and bandits, operate with relative impunity across borders into Niger, Chad, and Cameroon.
- **Loss of State Control:** These areas have become zones where state authority is weak or absent, undermining sovereignty and creating safe havens for transnational terrorism and arms trafficking.

Escalation of Armed Conflict and Insurgency

- **Arms Proliferation:** The influx of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) from Libya after 2011 has fueled insurgency and banditry in northern Nigeria. Over eight million illicit weapons circulate in West Africa, many entering Nigeria through porous borders (Fagge et al., 2021).
- **Transnational Terrorist Networks:** Groups exploit regional mobility to move fighters, funds, and logistics across borders, supported by weak inter-state coordination.

Economic Sabotage and Revenue Loss

- **Smuggling & Illicit Trade:** Smuggling of fuel, rice, vehicles, and other goods along the Benin border undermines customs revenue and distorts local markets.
- **Oil Bunkering and Illegal Refining:** In the South-South, illegal oil activities cost Nigeria over ₦500 billion annually and degrade the environment, further impoverishing communities.
- **Revenue Erosion:** Weak enforcement allows massive loss of tax and customs revenue, weakening the fiscal capacity of the state.

Human Security Crises

- **Human Trafficking:** Especially prevalent along the Cameroon corridor in the southeast, leading to forced labor, sexual exploitation, and child trafficking (NIS, 2024; UNODC, 2023).
- **Displacement and Livelihood Destruction:** Over 2 million people are internally displaced due to violence linked to cross-border crimes, particularly in the North-East.

- Gender-Based Exploitation: Women and youth in border communities face heightened risks of abuse by both criminals and coercive state actors during crackdowns.

Undermining Governance and Rule of Law

- Corruption and Institutional Complicity: Border officials often collude with smuggling networks, eroding public trust and enabling organized crime.
- Informal Economies: Survival-based smuggling becomes entrenched as a livelihood strategy due to the lack of formal economic opportunities.
- Erosion of Social Contract: Heavy-handed military responses alienate communities, reducing intelligence sharing and fostering resentment toward the state.

Regional Instability Spillover

- Nigeria's insecurity affects neighboring countries and vice versa:
- Sahelian instability feeds into northern Nigeria.
- Gulf of Guinea piracy impacts regional maritime trade.
- ECOWAS free movement protocols are exploited by traffickers and terrorists.

Assessment of Government Policy and Institutional Responses

Despite the numerous interventions, the effectiveness of Nigeria's policies remains limited due to structural flaws and implementation gaps.

The Nigerian government has developed policies such as the National Border Management Strategy (NBMS 2019-2023), participation in the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), deployment of e-surveillance systems, and the controversial 2019 border closure. However, these efforts remain largely militarized, fragmented, and top-down, prioritizing state security over human security (Dike, 2025). Institutional duplication, lack of coordination between agencies like NIS, NDLEA, and NIMASA, and widespread corruption limit effectiveness (ECOWAS, 2020; Ogbonnaya, 2020). Moreover, the exclusion of border communities from decision-making fosters distrust and reduces intelligence sharing.

These strategies fail because they treat symptoms, not causes.

As Gana et al. (2023) note, the dominance of securitization in security policy discourse frames cross-border crime as an 'existential threat,' justifying kinetic measures that often fail to address underlying causes. Combined with overlaps in institutional functions, weak inter-agency coordination, and exclusion of border communities, these approaches undermine trust and reduce intelligence sharing.

While frameworks like the National Security Policy (NSP, 2019) recognize the need for inclusive, human-centered approaches, implementation lags behind rhetoric. Sustainable security requires shifting from securitization to a critical human security framework that

integrates community engagement, livelihood support, anti-corruption reforms, and regional cooperation (UNDP, 1994; Tadjbakhsh & Chenoy, 2007).

Summary and Conclusion

This study demonstrates that cross-border crime poses a multidimensional threat to Nigeria's national security, cutting across all regions and border types, that is, land, sea, and air. While the manifestations differ by geography, insurgency and arms trafficking in the North, smuggling and trafficking in the West and East, and piracy and oil theft in the South. The underlying drivers remain consistent: weak governance, corruption, economic deprivation, and poor institutional coordination.

Through securitization theory, the study reveals how Nigeria's leadership has framed these threats as existential challenges, legitimizing militarized and state-centric responses. Yet the Critical Human Security Framework exposes the costs of this approach: persistent insecurity rooted in human vulnerability and social exclusion.

It is important to note that Nigeria's National Security Policy (NSP, 2019) already envisions a comprehensive and people-centered understanding of national security, integrating both state protection and citizen welfare. However, this vision has not been fully realized in border governance practice. Bridging this gap between policy intent and implementation is critical to restoring public trust and achieving sustainable security.

The study concludes that Nigeria's border insecurity is not simply a failure of control but a crisis of governance and inclusion. Sustainable national security, therefore, requires rebalancing state defense priorities with human-centered strategies that empower border communities, strengthen institutions, and promote regional cooperation. In essence, Nigeria's borders will remain vulnerable until the state secures not only its territory but also its people.

Recommendations

The study proposes a multi-level reform agenda organized around three pillars: governance integration, community and human-security inclusion, and institutional accountability.

Strengthen Integrated and Coordinated Border Governance

- Establish a National Border Governance Centre (NBGC) under the Office of the National Security Adviser (NSA) to coordinate all border agencies and operationalize the National Border Management Strategy (2019–2023).
- Create a legal and technology-enabled data-sharing framework linking NIS, NCS, Defense, and NIMASA through a unified digital platform.
- Enhance regional and maritime cooperation via ECOWAS and Gulf of Guinea frameworks for joint patrols, intelligence sharing, and extradition.

Expected Outcome: A coherent national-regional border system with faster response, reduced duplication, and improved deterrence.

Human Security and Community Resilience

- Institutionalize community-based early-warning networks across diverse border zones, involving women and youth in surveillance and reporting.
- Implement a border livelihoods and market integration program that formalizes small trade and expands economic alternatives.
- Mainstream gender, child protection, and displacement responses into all border operations (in partnership with NAPTIP and UN agencies).
-

Expected Outcome: Strengthened trust, reduced recruitment into illicit economies, and inclusive border development.

Enhancement of Institutional Accountability and Professionalism

- Enforce anti-corruption and digital oversight through electronic customs, public dashboards, and independent audit units.
- Operationalize the use of e-surveillance and unmanned aerial systems (UAVs) across key border posts to improve real-time monitoring, data gathering, and response times. However, as Abiodun (2020) notes, the effectiveness of drone-based surveillance in Nigeria depends on addressing structural barriers such as weak funding, inter-agency rivalry, and limited technical capacity.
- Advance targeted Security Sector Reform (SSR) through training, rotation, and performance-based incentives for customs, immigration, and marine police.
- Establish a Border Data and Research Unit within NBGC to generate annual reports and support evidence-based decision-making.

Expected Outcome: Transparent, data-driven institutions with improved integrity and performance.

Cross-Cutting Principles

- Adaptive Management: Pilot, monitor, and scale reforms based on performance evidence.
- Gender & Child Protection: Integrate protection protocols at all entry points.
- Evidence-Based Policy: Use real-time data to inform adaptive implementation.

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APPENDIXES

A. Government Key Policy and Institutional Initiatives on Border Security

S/N	Initiative	Description	Objective
1.	National Border Management Strategy (NBMS) 2019–2023	A framework for integrated border management involving multiple agencies.	Harmonize operations, enhance surveillance, and promote community engagement
2.	Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF)	Regional military coalition with Niger, Chad, Cameroon, and Benin	Combat Boko Haram and cross-border terrorism in the Lake Chad Basin
3.	ECOWAS Integrated Border Governance Framework	Regional cooperation mechanism.	Standardize border procedures, improve intelligence sharing, and facilitate legitimate trade
4.	e-Border Surveillance Systems	Deployment of biometric systems, drones, and command centers at key entry points	Modernize border control and track movements
5.	Border Closure (2019–2020)	Temporary closure of all land borders to curb smuggling	Stop the rampant importation of rice, poultry, and petroleum products

B. Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Nigeria's Key Policies on National Security

While these measures show intent, the paper finds them largely ineffective due to several reasons:

i. Partial Successes

- Improved Intelligence Sharing (MNJTF): Some success in degrading Boko Haram's operational capabilities.
- Technology Adoption: e-passports and automated border gates have improved efficiency at official ports of entry.
- Policy Recognition of Human Security: The National Security Policy (2019) nominally embraces human security principles.

C. Persistent Challenges and Failures of Government Key Policies and National Security

- Over-Militarization: Security responses prioritize force over development. Military deployments displace civilians without addressing root causes.
- Institutional Fragmentation: Multiple agencies (Immigration, Customs, Police, Defence, NIMASA) operate in silos with overlapping mandates and poor data-sharing.
- Systemic Corruption: Frontline officers often take bribes, allowing illicit flows to continue unchecked. Anti-corruption efforts lack teeth at operational levels.
- Neglect of Human Dimensions: Policies ignore poverty, unemployment, and marginalization driving people into smuggling as survival economies.
- Community Exclusion: Border populations are treated as suspects rather than partners in security. This reduces cooperation and intelligence flow.
- Short-Term Tactics Over Long-Term Strategy: Example: The 2019 border closure disrupted legitimate trade and hurt small traders, while smuggling networks adapted quickly via informal routes. No lasting impact was achieved.
- Weak Regional Implementation: While frameworks like ECOWAS exist, joint patrols, extradition treaties, and harmonized laws remain poorly enforced.
- Lack of Data and Monitoring: Absence of real-time data analytics hampers adaptive policymaking and performance evaluation.

D. Tabulated Summary of Findings

Aspect	Findings from the Paper
Impact of Cross-Border Crime	Undermines territorial integrity, fuels insurgency, drains economy, displaces populations, entrenches corruption, and destabilizes regionally.
Government Response	Characterized by militarization, fragmented institutions, short-term tactics (e.g., border closure), and weak implementation of progressive policies like NBMS.
Main Challenge	Gap between policy vision (e.g., NSP 2019) and practice—security remains top-down, exclusionary, and unresponsive to human needs.
Solution Proposed	Shift to integrated, people-centered border governance that balances enforcement with inclusion, development, and regional collaboration.