

Government Expenditure on Internal Security and Sustainable Development Goal 16

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Abstract: *This study examines the correlation between government expenditure on internal security and battle-related deaths in Nigeria, particularly in light of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16, which promotes peace, justice, and strong institutions. Utilizing data from 2000 to 2022, this research applies a correlational model to analyze the relationship between internal security spending and conflict-related fatalities. Findings reveal a significant positive correlation (0.8538) between security expenditure and battle-related deaths, suggesting that while heightened spending may target conflict reduction, it has yet to achieve a decline in fatalities. The study explores potential explanations for this outcome, including resource allocation toward addressing surface-level symptoms rather than underlying socioeconomic grievances that fuel violence. Additionally, mismanagement and corruption within security agencies, compounded by external pressures like regional instability, are identified as factors that might hinder the effectiveness of internal security expenditure. These findings underscore the necessity of balancing militarized responses with socioeconomic investments to achieve sustainable peace. The study recommends implementing community-centered security initiatives, enhanced training for security forces, and better coordination among security agencies to improve conflict resolution and reduce violence.*

Keywords: government expenditure, internal security, battle-related deaths, sustainable development goals, SDG 16, Nigeria, conflict resolution, socioeconomic stability, regional instability, peacebuilding.

INTRODUCTION

The Nigerian government has increased its focus on internal security expenditures over the years, aiming to curb domestic violence, insurgency, and criminal activities. The investments in agencies such as the Nigerian Police Force, State Security Services, and National Intelligence Agency are intended to strengthen internal security frameworks and reduce the risk of violence and conflict-related fatalities. However, despite these increased allocations, battle-related deaths and displacements due to internal conflict continue to persist. Since the escalation of the Boko Haram insurgency in 2009, the demand for robust internal security measures has been evident. However, the annual rise in internal security expenditure has not corresponded with a proportional decrease in fatalities, suggesting possible inefficiencies or inadequacies in the allocation and management of resources (Adebakin & Raimi, 2012; United Nations, 2023).

Furthermore, internal security spending alone may not address underlying social grievances that often fuel conflict, such as poverty and political marginalization. Studies indicate that addressing these root causes through social welfare and community empowerment programs may enhance the impact of internal security spending on reducing violence (Maku, 2009; Muritala & Taio, 2011). Therefore, it is critical to analyze the relationship between government expenditure on internal security and actual outcomes in terms of battle-related deaths to understand the effectiveness of these investments in fostering peace and stability in Nigeria.

Despite substantial investments in internal security, Nigeria continues to witness high levels of violence, with internal security agencies facing challenges in controlling insurgency and rising criminal activities. This issue raises questions about the efficiency of internal security expenditures and whether these funds are being used effectively to achieve their intended outcomes. Research reveals that although government spending on internal security has increased, battle-related deaths resulting from displacement and conflict have not decreased accordingly (Odhiambo, 2018; Muritala & Taio, 2011). The persistence of violence despite these expenditures points to a gap in understanding how internal security budgets affect on-the-ground security. This study seeks to explore the relationship between government spending on internal security and the prevalence of battle-related deaths to identify potential factors hindering the effectiveness of these expenditures.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Government Expenditure on Internal Security

Government expenditure on internal security in Nigeria is primarily aimed at sustaining national peace and addressing both internal and external threats to security. Given that protecting lives and property is a constitutional priority, Nigeria has established the National Security Agency (NSA) as its primary security framework. The NSA oversees multiple agencies, including the National Intelligence Agency (NIA), National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), Nigerian Police Force (NPF), Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), Nigerian Immigration Services (NIS), and State Security Services

(SSS) (Adebakin & Raimi, 2012). These agencies receive substantial government funding to uphold peace and stability across the country, with a clear constitutional mandate for internal security appropriations.

Historical data indicate a marked increase in internal security spending from 1999, coinciding with the start of Nigeria's democratic governance. This escalation was largely in response to early armed struggles, political crises, and demands for resource control. However, the emergence of Boko Haram in the early 2000s, which evolved into a cross-border terrorism threat, put additional pressure on government resources, resulting in significant boosts in security budgets (Adebakin & Raimi, 2012). Further justifications for increased spending have included the rise in ethno-religious conflicts, frequent kidnappings for ransom, oil installation sabotage, and other security challenges. As sectarian crises and criminal activities such as ritual killings persist, Nigeria's internal security expenditure continues to reflect the government's commitment to countering these complex threats (Maku, 2009).

Sustainable Development Goals

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a set of 17 global objectives established by the United Nations in 2015, aimed at addressing critical issues around poverty, inequality, environmental degradation, peace, and justice by the year 2030. These goals are intended to guide member nations, including Nigeria, towards achieving improvements in "People, Planet, and Prosperity." For instance, SDG 1 targets the eradication of poverty, with objectives to halve the population living in poverty, ensure access to resources, and strengthen social protection systems. SDG 2 focuses on ending hunger by improving food security, promoting sustainable agriculture, and enhancing nutrition, all of which have been further underscored by recent global crises exacerbating food shortages.

In health, education, and gender equality, the SDGs emphasize accessibility and inclusivity. SDG 3 aims to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being, addressing issues like maternal health, child mortality, and universal health coverage. Goal 4 advocates for equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities, ensuring that both boys and girls can access education, a foundation for reducing future inequality. Goal 5 targets gender equality, seeking to empower women and girls by ending all forms of discrimination and violence, including harmful practices like child marriage and gender-based violence.

The SDGs also prioritize environmental sustainability and responsible resource management. SDG 6 is dedicated to providing universal access to clean water and sanitation, essential for health and well-being. Similarly, Goal 7 focuses on affordable and sustainable energy, essential for development, especially as around 800 million people still lack electricity. Goals related to sustainable cities, responsible consumption, and climate action (SDGs 11, 12, and 13) address urbanization challenges, advocate for sustainable practices, and emphasize climate resilience through actions to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and improve energy efficiency.

Lastly, SDG 16 emphasizes the importance of peace, justice, and strong institutions, underscoring the need for governance structures that uphold justice, transparency, and

inclusion. This goal calls for efforts to reduce violence, provide access to justice, and build accountable institutions. Goal 17 highlights the need for partnerships, calling on nations to work together and strengthen international cooperation for achieving the SDGs. The SDGs collectively offer a roadmap for sustainable development, guiding countries toward a shared vision of prosperity, social inclusivity, and environmental sustainability by 2030.

Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions (SDG 16)

The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) number 16 aims to promote just, peaceful, and inclusive societies while ensuring access to justice and creating effective, accountable institutions at all levels. This goal underscores that all individuals, regardless of ethnicity, faith, or sexual orientation, should live free from violence and fear, underscoring the foundational need for security and equality in all societies. Achieving Goal 16 is essential for sustainable development, as the absence of peace impedes growth, social harmony, and resource development (UN SDG Report, 2023).

However, achieving SDG 16 faces considerable setbacks due to ongoing and escalating conflicts globally. In 2022, there was a more than 50% surge in conflict-related civilian deaths, a grim milestone attributed largely to the Russia-Ukraine war, which disrupted global security efforts. High levels of armed violence, insecurity, and crime, including sexual violence and exploitation, continue to hinder sustainable development and exacerbate poverty in many regions. This reality emphasizes that without robust actions to protect vulnerable populations, such as reducing illicit arms flows and combating corruption, SDG 16 remains out of reach (UN Data on Our World in Data, 2023).

In addressing these issues, coordinated efforts among governments, civil society, and local communities are essential to create lasting peace and tackle insecurity. Promoting the rule of law and respecting human rights are central to this process, as these actions encourage transparency, combat illicit practices, and ensure inclusive participation. Goal 16 also aligns with broader human rights frameworks by advocating for societal structures that respect privacy, expression, and access to information—principles necessary to safeguard individual rights and establish stable, peaceful communities (Sustainable Development Goals Report, 2023).

Peace remains a fundamental requirement for social and economic development, as conflict and instability undermine societal progress and lead to losses in lives and resources. Without equal access to justice, the rights of marginalized populations are often left unprotected, reinforcing cycles of resentment and unrest. The growing displacement of people—108.4 million worldwide at the end of 2022—further reveals the impact of these unresolved issues, highlighting a pressing need to strengthen institutions that deliver justice and address the root causes of violence and insecurity (UN Data on Our World in Data, 2023).

Theoretical Framework

The **Keynesian Theory**, developed by John Maynard Keynes, underscores the importance of government intervention to stabilize economies, particularly through increased public spending

during periods of economic decline or social unrest (Romer, 1986; Ghali, 1998). Keynesian economics argues that heightened government expenditure stimulates aggregate demand, which in turn fosters economic growth. Applying this theory to government expenditure on internal security, investments in security agencies and public safety infrastructure can stimulate the economy by ensuring a stable environment for businesses and protecting citizens. In this way, internal security spending not only aims to reduce violence and safeguard lives but also supports the Keynesian view that government spending is a crucial driver of sustained economic growth (Bhartia, 2002; Mitchell, 2005).

The **Wiseman-Peacock Hypothesis** provides further insight, suggesting that public expenditure grows in response to crises, with sudden increases creating a “displacement effect” as government spending moves to a higher baseline. According to Wiseman and Peacock, major social or economic disruptions lead to a public demand for greater government action, which is then reflected in increased spending (Bhartia, 2002). This framework aligns with Nigeria’s internal security spending patterns, where government expenditures have risen sharply in response to specific security threats, such as insurgencies and kidnapping crises, stabilizing at a higher level as the population grows accustomed to the increased budget for security (Mitchell, 2005).

The **Concentration Effect** within the Wiseman-Peacock Hypothesis highlights the tendency for central government activities to expand more rapidly than local initiatives, especially during economic growth phases or heightened security needs. In Nigeria, the federal government’s substantial investment in security agencies like the National Security Agency and the Nigerian Police Force reflects this effect, as these national bodies have a broader mandate to address security issues that local governments are often unable to tackle effectively due to resource limitations. Thus, the concentration effect underscores the essential role of federal spending on internal security in countering national threats, with the central government assuming an increasing share of responsibilities in response to rising security challenges.

Empirical Review

Empirical studies on government expenditure reveal diverse findings regarding the relationship between spending on security, defense, and economic growth. Mohanty et al. (2020) explored this relationship in India, examining data from 1970 to 2016 with an Autoregressive Distributed Lag model and Toda-Yamamoto Granger causality approach. The study found that defense expenditure positively impacts economic growth, especially capital defense spending, which significantly influences India’s economic development. The study suggests prioritizing capital defense spending to support economic growth, as causality analysis reveals bidirectional causation between defense expenditure and growth, and unidirectional causation from capital defense to economic growth.

In Nigeria, Okeke et al. (2021) analyzed the effect of defense and internal security spending on economic growth from 1994 to 2020 using Vector Autoregressive Estimates. Contrary to Mohanty et al., Okeke and colleagues found an insignificant impact of recurrent defense and internal security spending on economic indicators like RGDP and HDI. They recommend

careful and strategic investment in security spending, arguing that improved accountability could enhance sustainable development gains. Similarly, Abu and Marvelous (2020) employed an Error Correction Model and Ordinary Least Squares to investigate security spending's effect on Nigeria's economic growth (1986-2018). They observed significant short-term positive effects of security spending on economic growth, especially for recurrent defense spending, but noted that long-term influences were statistically insignificant except for recurrent defense expenditures.

Other studies have examined the effects of government expenditure components on economic and social metrics beyond direct economic growth. For instance, Ozigbu (2018) and Oriavwote and Ukawe (2018) found significant impacts of public debt and government health and education spending on poverty reduction in Nigeria. While Ozigbu found a positive relationship between external debt and poverty incidence, Oriavwote and Ukawe noted a positive but low-elasticity impact of health and education expenditure on per capita income. They observed bi-causality between education spending and income but no significant causation between other expenditure components. Similarly, studies by Shakavworria (2018) and Orimolade and Olusola (2019) have shown mixed results on the effects of government expenditures, such as health and general administration, on economic and social indicators, underscoring the importance of tailored expenditure policies to maximize impact.

Research on the broader economic effects of security and defense spending often finds that capital investments contribute more substantially than recurrent expenditures to long-term growth. For example, Mbah et al. (2021) analyzed internal security spending in Nigeria and discovered a positive short-term correlation with economic growth, though negative in the long run. Their study highlights the complexity of security expenditures' economic impacts and aligns with Waweru's (2021) findings in East Africa, where public capital expenditure significantly influenced regional economic growth. These studies collectively emphasize that while security spending can foster growth, strategic allocation between capital and recurrent spending is essential for sustainable economic and social improvements.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs an ex-post facto research design, relying on historical data to examine the effects of government spending in Nigeria across various sectors from 2000 to 2022. The chosen period aligns with the launch of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), facilitating analysis of spending impacts relative to these global initiatives. Data for the study were sourced from the Central Bank of Nigeria's Statistical Bulletin, the National Bureau of Statistics, United Nations datasets, and the World Bank's World Development Indicators. The study uses annual government expenditure figures and records of conflict-related deaths and displacements, providing a comprehensive view of government spending impacts over the two-decade period.

Model Specification

A Correlational Model was employed to evaluate the relationship between Government Expenditure and Number of deaths by conflicts and violence in Nigeria.

The model is specified as follows

$$r_{xy} = \frac{\sum(x_i - \bar{x})(y_i - \bar{y})}{\sqrt{\sum(x_i - \bar{x})^2 \sum(y_i - \bar{y})^2}}$$

Where:

r_{xy} = is the correlation coefficient of the linear relationship between the variables x and y

x_i is the value of the x-variables in the sample

\bar{x} is the mean of the values of the x-variables

y_i is the values of the y-variables in the sample

\bar{y} is the mean of the values of the y-variables in the sample

Y represents other variables taken separately in each case.

Data Analysis

The normality of the distribution of the data series is shown by the coefficients of Skewness, Kurtosis, and the probability values of the Jaque-Bera test for normality.

Table 4.2.1: Descriptive Statistic

	LOGBRD	ISEXP	HEXP	ADMEXP
Mean	2.771596	2.334369	2.080940	2.569231
Median	2.607455	2.436387	2.255273	2.680495
Std. Dev.	0.542967	0.418512	0.432102	0.350336
Skewness	-0.019560	-0.605499	-0.452797	-0.843005
Kurtosis	1.742724	2.460831	2.065665	2.591478
Jarque-Bera	1.516344	1.684000	1.622537	2.884122
Probability	0.468522	0.430848	0.444294	0.236440
Observations	23	23	23	23

Source: Authors Computation, 2024 (Eviews-10)

Table 4.2.1 presents descriptive statistics for LOGBRD (log of battle-related deaths), ISEXP (internal security expenditure), HEXP (health expenditure), and ADMEXP (administrative expenditure):

LOGBRD (Log of Battle-Related Deaths): The Skewness for LOGBRD is close to zero (-0.0196), indicating a nearly symmetrical distribution. The positive kurtosis (1.74) suggests that the distribution has heavier tails and a sharper peak than a normal distribution. The Jarque-Bera statistic (1.52) and its associated p-value (0.468) indicate that there is no significant departure from normality in the distribution of LOGBRD.

ISEXP (Internal Security Expenditure): The negative Skewness (-0.605) suggests that the distribution is skewed to the left, with a longer left tail. The positive kurtosis (2.46) indicates that the distribution has heavier tails and a sharper peak than a normal distribution. The Jarque-

Bera statistic (1.68) and its associated p-value (0.431) suggest that there is no significant departure from normality in the distribution of ISEXP.

HEXP (Health Expenditure): The negative skewness (-0.453) suggests a left skew, with a longer left tail. The positive kurtosis (2.07) indicates that the distribution has heavier tails and a sharper peak than a normal distribution. The Jarque-Bera statistic (1.62) and its associated p-value (0.444) suggest that there is no significant departure from normality in the distribution of HEXP.

ADMEXP (Administrative Expenditure): The negative skewness (-0.843) suggests a pronounced left skew, with a longer left tail. The positive kurtosis (2.59) indicates that the distribution has heavier tails and a sharper peak than a normal distribution. The Jarque-Bera statistic (2.88) and its associated p-value (0.236) suggest that there is no significant departure from normality in the distribution of ADMEXP.

Table 4.2.2: Unit Root Test Results

Variable	ADF Unit Root Test			
	t-Statistic at Levels	P-value	t-Statistic at 1 st Difference	P-value
BRD	0.3614	0.7798	-2.5821	0.0126
ISEXP	2.8942	0.9981	-5.4954	0.0014
HEXP	2.2020	0.9909	-4.2562	0.0002
ADMEXP	1.7413	0.9764	-4.8274	0.0000

Source: Authors Computation, 2024 (Eviews-10)

Table 4.2.2 presents the results of the Augmented Dickey-Fuller (ADF) unit root test for each variable, both at levels and after taking the first difference:

Battle-Related Deaths (BRD): At levels, the ADF test statistic is 0.3614 with a p-value of 0.7798, indicating that battle-related deaths are non-stationary. After taking the first difference, the ADF test statistic becomes -2.5821 with a p-value of 0.0126, which is statistically significant at the 5% level. This suggests that the first difference of battle-related deaths is stationary.

Internal Security Expenditure (ISEXP): At levels, the ADF test statistic is 2.8942 with a p-value of 0.9981, indicating that internal security expenditure is non-stationary. After differencing, the ADF test statistic becomes -5.4954 with a p-value of 0.0014, which is highly statistically significant at the 1% level. This indicates that the first difference of internal security expenditure is stationary.

Health Expenditure (HEXP): At levels, the ADF test statistic is 2.2020 with a p-value of 0.9909, indicating that health expenditure is non-stationary. After differencing, the ADF test statistic becomes -4.2562 with a p-value of 0.0002, indicating that the first difference of health expenditure is stationary.

Administrative Expenditure (ADMEXP): At levels, the ADF test statistic is 1.7413 with a p-value of 0.9764, indicating that administrative expenditure is non-stationary. After

differencing, the ADF test statistic becomes -4.8274 with a p-value of 0.0000, indicating that the first difference of administrative expenditure is stationary.

Table 4.2.3: Panel Regression Analysis (Dependent Variable: BRD)

Variable	Coefficient	Standard Error	t-Stat	p-Value
ISEX	0.439838	0.737940	0.596034	0.5590
HEXP	1.122357	1.024123	1.095919	0.2884
ADMEXP	-0.810966	0.554898	-1.461469	0.1621
C	0.950968	0.742195	1.281292	0.2173

$R^2 = 0.82$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.76$, F-Stat = 15.08696, Prob(F-stat) = 0.000010 DW = 0.99

Source: Authors Computation, 2024 (Eviews-10)

Table 4.2.3 presents the results of a panel regression analysis with battle-related deaths (BRD) as the dependent variable and several independent variables: ISEX (Internal Security Expenditure), HEXP (Health Expenditure), and ADMEXP (Administrative Expenditure):

Internal Security Expenditure (ISEXP): The coefficient for ISEX is positive (0.4398), suggesting that an increase in internal security expenditure is associated with an increase in battle-related deaths, but this effect is not statistically significant ($p = 0.5590$). Thus, there is insufficient evidence to conclude that internal security expenditure has a significant impact on battle-related deaths in Nigeria based on this model. The lack of significance suggests that the direction and magnitude of this effect are uncertain, implying that higher internal security expenditure may or may not directly contribute to increased battle-related deaths in Nigeria.

Table 4.2.7: Spearman Rank-Order Covariance Analysis Result

	ISEXP/BRD	HEXP /BRD	ADMEXP /BRD
Correlation	0.853755	0.827075	0.724308
t-Statistic	7.514085	6.742914	4.814086
P-Values	0.0000	0.0000	0.0001
Observation	32	32	32

Source: E-views 10.0 Software, 2024

Table presents the results of Spearman Rank-Order Covariance Analysis, which is a non-parametric method used to assess the strength and direction of association between two variables.

Internal Security Expenditure (ISEXP) / Battle-Related Deaths (BRD): The correlation coefficient between internal security expenditure and battle-related deaths is 0.853755, indicating a strong positive association. The high t-statistic of 7.514085 and the extremely low p-value of 0.0000 provide strong evidence of the significance of this correlation. This suggests that higher levels of government expenditure on internal security are strongly correlated with increased battle-related deaths in Nigeria.

TEST OF HYPOTHESES

The five hypotheses formulated in chapter one was subjected to empirical testing using the following decision rule:

Statement of Decision Criteria

Decision Rule: If the correlation coefficient (r) exceeds 0.7, the null hypothesis is rejected implying a strong relationship. Conversely, if the correlation coefficient is less than or equal to 0.7, the null hypothesis is accepted. This implies that the variables share no relationship. If the P-value falls below the 0.05 threshold, it signifies robust evidence to reject the null hypothesis, thus allowing the conclusion that the coefficient is statistically significant and distinct from zero. Conversely, when the P-value exceeds 0.05, the evidence is considered insufficient to reject the null hypothesis, leading to the acceptance of H_0 .

Test of Hypothesis One

H_0 : Government expenditures on internal security has no relationship with battle related deaths in Nigeria.

H_1 : Government expenditures on internal security have a strong relationship with battle related deaths in Nigeria.

Decision: With a correlation coefficient of 0.853755, surpassing the threshold of 0.7, the analysis suggests a robust relationship between government expenditures on internal security and battle-related deaths in Nigeria. Furthermore, the associated p-value provides significant statistical evidence, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This implies that higher levels of investment in internal security initiatives by the government are strongly associated with increased occurrences of battle-related deaths within the country.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The significant correlation coefficient of 0.853755 between government expenditures on internal security and battle-related deaths in Nigeria indicates a strong relationship that warrants thorough examination. One plausible explanation for this correlation is the allocation of resources toward combating internal conflicts, insurgency, and terrorism within the country. Nigeria has experienced various forms of internal strife, including conflicts related to ethnic tensions, religious extremism, and separatist movements. In response to these challenges, the government may increase spending on security forces, intelligence gathering, and counter-terrorism measures. However, the effectiveness of these measures in quelling violence may be limited, leading to prolonged conflicts and escalating levels of battle-related deaths.

Additionally, the correlation could reflect underlying socioeconomic factors contributing to both government expenditures on internal security and the incidence of battle-related deaths. Persistent poverty, inequality, and unemployment can fuel grievances and social unrest, necessitating greater government spending on security measures to maintain order. However, such expenditures may only address the symptoms of conflict rather than addressing root

causes, resulting in a cycle of violence that exacerbates the situation. Moreover, corruption and mismanagement within security agencies may undermine the impact of government spending, leading to inefficiencies and failures in addressing security challenges effectively.

Furthermore, the correlation may also be influenced by external factors such as regional instability and transnational threats. Nigeria's proximity to conflict-prone regions, such as the Sahel and the Gulf of Guinea, exposes it to spillover effects from neighboring countries, including the proliferation of arms, infiltration of extremist groups, and illicit activities. As a result, the government may allocate significant resources to fortifying borders, enhancing maritime security, and participating in regional peacekeeping efforts, contributing to higher expenditures on internal security. However, these efforts may inadvertently escalate tensions and violence within Nigeria, leading to an increase in battle-related deaths.

Moreover, the correlation could be indicative of a militarized approach to governance, where security concerns take precedence over socioeconomic development and human rights considerations. Heavy-handed security measures, including crackdowns on dissent and militarized responses to civil unrest, may exacerbate grievances and fuel resentment among marginalized communities, ultimately leading to further violence and conflict. Additionally, the militarization of governance may divert resources away from essential social services, such as education, healthcare, and infrastructure, exacerbating underlying socioeconomic inequalities and perpetuating cycles of violence and instability.

Empirical studies support the significant correlation between Nigeria's government expenditures on internal security and battle-related deaths, illustrating how increased spending can both address and exacerbate conflict. Okeke et al. (2021) found that while rising security budgets in Nigeria aimed to reduce violence, the long-term effects on economic indicators remained limited, implying that resource allocation may address immediate security concerns without tackling root social issues. Similarly, Abu and Marvelous (2020) noted that while short-term economic growth benefited from security spending, long-term impacts on Real GDP were negligible, pointing to potential inefficiencies and corruption within security agencies. Mbah et al. (2021) highlighted a complex pattern where internal security spending positively influenced growth in the short term but negatively impacted it in the long run, likely due to unresolved socioeconomic factors like poverty and inequality. Regionally, Waweru (2021) observed that heavy security expenditures in East Africa, often necessitated by external threats, could inadvertently intensify internal tensions, as seen in Nigeria's response to transnational risks. These findings collectively suggest that while government expenditures on security can maintain order temporarily, their impact on long-term stability is limited without addressing underlying socioeconomic grievances.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study investigated the correlation between government expenditure on internal security and the frequency of battle-related fatalities in Nigeria. Despite substantial spending aimed at enhancing internal security, the nation continues to face severe insecurity, illustrated by tragic

incidents such as the mass killing of Christians in Plateau State on Christmas Day, 25th December 2023. Persistent issues like kidnappings, murders, abductions, and political violence have grown alarmingly common, instilling widespread fear among citizens since the rise of Boko Haram in 2010. The study's findings reveal a significant and concerning relationship between government expenditures on internal security and battle-related deaths in Nigeria. The strong positive correlation observed suggests that while increased spending on security is intended to address threats, it may not effectively reduce violence, highlighting complexities within Nigeria's security landscape. These results hold critical implications for policymakers, security experts, and stakeholders working to foster peace and stability in Nigeria.

The robust correlation between internal security spending and conflict-related fatalities indicates that resource allocation within the security sector influences the intensity of violence across the country. This underscores the importance of re-evaluating security expenditures and focusing on strategies that address the root causes of conflict. The findings advocate for evidence-based policymaking, suggesting that beyond increasing security budgets, sustainable interventions are necessary to build lasting peace and reduce the frequency of violence in Nigeria.

The study recommend that the government should invest in community policing initiatives that prioritize engagement with local communities, building trust, and addressing community-specific security concerns. Community policing can help prevent conflicts from escalating and foster collaboration between law enforcement agencies and communities in conflict-affected areas. They should provide specialized training and capacity building programs for security forces to improve their conflict resolution skills, human rights awareness, and adherence to international humanitarian law. Emphasize the importance of de-escalation tactics and non-violent approaches to maintaining peace and security. They should promote coordination and cooperation between different security agencies, such as the police, military, and paramilitary forces, to ensure a comprehensive and cohesive approach to internal security. Encourage information sharing, joint operations, and unified strategies to effectively address security challenges.

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