

Dare Ezekiel Arowolo, Lecturer
Department of Public Administration, Adekunle Ajasin University,
Akungba Akoko, Ondo State, Nigeria.
Email: dare.arowolo@aaua.edu.ng

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Review paper

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CORRUPTION AND COUNTERINSURGENCY FINANCING IN NIGERIA

Abstract: *This study investigates the persistent escalation of insurgency in Nigeria despite increased counterinsurgency funding, which has claimed over 350,000 lives due to Boko Haram. Despite substantial investments, a gap exists between financial allocation and operational performance. The research links corruption in counterinsurgency financing to insurgency escalation, as mismanagement and embezzlement weaken military and governance structures. Using evidence-based research methods, the study shows how corruption hinders efforts to address the insurgency, offering insights into the complex relationship between corruption, governance, and security challenges in northeastern Nigeria.*

Keywords: *Boko Haram; Corruption; Counterinsurgency; Defence; Finance*

Introduction and the problem

Insecurity is gradually becoming ubiquitous and has defied geography and borders (Bandyopadhyay, Sandler, & Younas, 2015; Nwaobi, 2013). From national insecurity to global insecurity, insecurity is now a pandemic phenomenon, from al-Qaida in Arab, regional war in Eastern Europe, terrorism in Turkey and its environs, rising social ills in the UK, shootings in America to insurgency in some parts of Africa (Ahmed, 2004; Bandyopadhyay, Sandler, & Younas, 2015). All these suggest that insecurity is pervasive across the world, and no region or country is not being challenged by one form of insecurity

or another, ranging from food insecurity, economic insecurity, and threat to lives and property to maiming and killings (Burke, 2017; Cudworth & Hobden, 2017). In particular, and as a prevalent form of insecurity, the history of insurgency seems also prevalent as several countries have shared their moments of insurgency in the past. These include the Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA) in Spain; the Irish Republican Army (IRA) in the UK and Bishopsgate attacks on London's transport system on July 7, 2005, the Hamas group in Pakistan, to mention but a few (Gaibulloev & Sandler, 2013; Sandler, 2014).

Indeed, the 20th century was defined by distressing global wars, colonial struggles and ideological supremacy tussle (Bandyopadhyay, Sandler, & Younas, 2015; Sandler, 2014). Yet, the 21st century did not record any marked difference as it shares some semblance of global phenomena tangential to those of the 20th century. Remarkably, and as noted by Nwaobi (2013), new threats such as organized crime, trafficking, civil unrest and terrorism have supplemented the conventional war between countries.

The spread and effect of insurgency are not in doubt; what is, perhaps, in contention is the varying degree of its severity, as virtually all countries of the world have experienced some semblance of terrorist spasm or insurgent attack, which has either led to the loss of lives and properties and other national assets, causing the victim-countries dearly or derailing their developmental plans and impairing national stability (Idowu, 2018). The 21st century, in particular, has come to be defined by its unique security challenges that are purely technology-induced. Technological advancement also aids the manufacturing and procurement of weapons of mass destruction. This has redirected and redefined the world's face and phase of insecurity. As submitted by Abrahamsen and Williams (2009), the severity and consequences of this are more felt in Africa and the Middle East, as these places have become fertile grounds not only for breeding terrorism but also for propagating its ideals.

Of note were the September 11, 2001 attacks in the United States, which were perceived as both devastating and offensive to the power colossus of the US. As Aigbe and Aimuan (2018) observed, this tragic twist and turn in global insecurity has resulted in a paradigm shift of international attention from diseases, famine, drought, natural disasters and other manufactured disasters to an insurgency that has continually posed a significant peril to

human existence. The world has recorded a lot of terrorist attacks; some of these incidents include the Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA) in Spain, the Irish Republican Army (IRA) in London and the Bishopsgate attacks on London's transport system on July 7, 2005, and the Hamas group in Palestine (Gaibulloev & Sandler, 2009). As submitted by the duo of Aigbe and Aimuan (2018), Africa has also shared in the history and presence of insurgency, which includes Al Shabaab in Kenya, Al Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) in North Africa, Lord Resistance Army in Uganda, Hezbollah terrorist group in Lebanon, the Houthi rebels in Yemen, Alshabaab in Somalia, and essentially Boko Haram sect in Nigeria (Abrahamsen & Williams, 2009; Idowu, 2018).

Inferred from the foregoing is that insecurity has become planetary, as some dosage can be found in all continents. Issues related to nuclear weapons, conventional arms, gender violence, climate change, diseases, bioweapons, cyber-conflict, children in conflict, crimes against humanity, and refugees are identified as some of the challenges facing countries all over the world (Burke, 2017; Cudworth & Hobden, 2017; True & Tanyag, 2017). What has not been featured in the various studies is the relationship between corruption in counterinsurgency financing and the escalation of the Boko Haram insurgency in northeast Nigeria. This is a new way of thinking in the context and literature of insurgency. This new perspective in the security literature deserves intellectual engagement in the public discourse.

Therefore, scholars should be interested in this new dimension of insecurity, which has primarily influenced the exacerbation of insecurity in northeastern Nigeria. This study thus investigates the effects of corruption in the procurement process in the defense sector on the Boko Haram insurgency in northeast Nigeria.

Research Methods

This study employs descriptive analysis and evidence-based research to explore the relationship between corruption and insurgency in northeastern Nigeria. The descriptive analysis involves systematically gathering and analyzing qualitative data to understand patterns and trends within the corruption and counterinsurgency financing in Nigeria's

defense sector. Evidence-based research methods ensure that conclusions are grounded in objective, verifiable evidence. By applying these methods, the study seeks to thoroughly examine how corruption exacerbates and escalates the ongoing insurgency in the region, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of the challenges faced in the fight against insurgency.

Literature Review

This section focuses on conceptualizing and contextualizing the tools of analysis: corruption, insurgency and the defense sector. This is desirable as these concepts are carefully linked in the study to give a combined meaning of their effects on one another. To start with, the idea of corruption has been variously defined. There is no doubt that corruption in Nigeria has become pervasive and does not exclude any area of her national life (Arowolo, 2022; Arowolo & Olaniyan, 2018; Ladipo, 2002; NBS, 2017). According to Arowolo (2022), corruption, as a concept, seems difficult to define. It is agreed that the moral implication of corruption is derived from its Latin word, *corrupter*, which means to lose value or to deprave (Arowolo, 2022; Tenamwenye, 2014; Warf, 2017). Arising from Latin interpretation, corruption can be seen as dishonesty, involving perversion of rules for private gain. Ladipo (2002) defines corruption as misusing office for unofficial ends. He adds that the act is not only limited to bribery but also includes extortion, influence peddling, nepotism, fraud, the use of “speed up” (money paid to government officials to speed up their consideration of a business matter falling within their jurisdiction) and embezzlement. Abuse of office or perversion of due process in the procurement process for personal gains, espoused by Arowolo (2022) and Ladipo (2002), may be construed as corruption, which might have affected the fight against insurgency in northeastern Nigeria.

Another essential tool to be examined is the concept of the defense sector. This section conceptualizes and contextualizes the idea and nature of the defense sector. The study views the defense sector as a strategy for protecting a country’s territorial integrity against internal subversion and external aggression. Its conceptualization, therefore, is value-laden. This is because the defense sector, as a concept, is sensitively strategic and strategically sensitive, either in Nigeria or elsewhere. It is about the powerhouse of a country on which its territory and sovereignty depend. It is a military establishment whose activities include the

production of military equipment, procurement of armaments, ammunition, electrical and electronic equipment, warplanes, warships, war vehicles of any type, and even food items needed on the battlefield (IGI Global, 2024). In this context, the defense sector includes military activities, procurement processes, locally manufactured ammunitions, strategies designed to combat insurgency, intelligence gathering ability, commitment to prosecuting the war, and military personnel drafted and deployed to northeast Nigeria to prosecute the war against insurgency.

Next is the concept of insurgency. It is said that insurgency is politically charged (Hoffman, 1988). In most cases, it is wrapped under religion in order to gain the sympathy of religious fanatics (Arowolo & Akinola, 2018; Lawal, 2010). Royal Canadian Mounted Police also shares this stance. In its views, insurgency is an organized armed struggle by a selection of the local population against the State, usually with foreign support (Royal Canadian Mounted Police, 2009). The position of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police validates the earlier opinion expressed by Arowolo and Akinola. This is because the local population is enlisted to wage war against the State. So, sympathy is sought and received from the disgruntled and disenchanted citizens against the Government. Peters (2006) and Scheuer (2008), in their separate studies, characterize insurgency as a form of war targeted at overthrowing existing ruling structures by a combination of force and popular appeal. Insurgency is a rebellion against authority directed at challenging the legitimacy of a constituted government and ultimately bringing down, in some extreme cases, the Government of a state.

As a consequence, there has been a tremendous increase in deaths arising from terrorism. According to the Institute for Economics and Peace (2015), death tolls from terrorism have increased by 80% in 2014, representing the highest level of 32,685 deaths, compared to 18,111 in 2013. Boko Haram and ISIL alone were jointly responsible for 51% of all claimed global fatalities in 2014. Afghanistan, Iraq, Nigeria, Pakistan and Syria accounted for 78% and 57%, respectively, of all deaths and attacks that occurred in the world. Nigeria experienced the most significant increase in terrorist activity, with 7,512 deaths in 2014, an increase of over 300% since 2013. The global economic cost of terrorism reached an all-time peak at US\$52.9 billion. Since the year 2000, there have been over 61,000 terrorist attacks, killing more than 140,000 people (Institute for Economics and Peace, 2015).

Of particular note here is the sect in Nigeria's northeastern region, Boko Haram, whose deadly activities have posed substantial threats to Nigeria by instigating considerable deaths and causing regional and national instability. It has, on the other hand, displaced citizens from their ancestral homes and impaired the national economy, such that resources that could have been used for infrastructure and employment have been primarily diverted to tackle the insurgency. As Arowolo and Akinola (2018) aver, in addition to all of these, it has also negatively affected the image of Nigeria abroad, causing fear in potential investors. The Boko Haram insurgency has created an environment that is unsafe for human and material resources. The insurgents' activities have scared away Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). This view is reinforced by Collier and Venables (2007), who state that insurgency destabilizes trade indicators and is most pronounced in export volumes and growth. According to them, insurgency leads to diversifying economic needs toward security demands and can also disrupt labor and production activities (Collier & Venables, 2007).

Furthermore, the activities of the insurgents have led to massive displacement of people from their ancestral homes in the affected states (Alemika, 2012). Alemika (2012) believes that the relocation of people from these states was, in most cases, hurriedly carried out, which gave vent for a severe crisis in the relocation and allocation of ad hoc homes for the displaced. In this regard, it is estimated that about 2.3 million people have been displaced since the beginning of the insurgency in 2009 (Human Rights Watch, 2023).

The focus of this study is not the impact of insurgency on Nigeria; instead, it is the relationship between procurement corruption and the escalation of insurgency in northeastern Nigeria. This is a new area that has not been sufficiently interrogated. Several studies have, of course, focused on nature and impact of insurgency on economy and so on (Abadie & Gardeazabal, 2008; Adebayo, 2014; Adelaja & George, 2019; Adenrele, 2012; Agbibo, 2013; Aro, 2013; Awojobi, 2014; Awortu, 2015; Bertoni, Di Maio, Molini, & Nistico, 2019; Bintube, 2015; Bozzoli, Brück, & Sottas, 2010; Emmanuel, 2015; Enobi & Johnson-Rokosu, 2016).

For instance, the study carried out by Abadie and Gardeazabal (2008) examines the pervasive nature of terrorism and its effect on the global economy. Similarly, the work of

Bozzoli, Brück and Sottas (2010) is similar to that of Abadie and Gardeazabal. According to Bozzoli, Brück and Sottas (2010), insurgency has cost the global economy a fortune. They look at the costs of the conflict on the global economy. Adebayo (2014) interrogates the effects of terrorism on Nigerian national development. The studies of Abadie and Gardeazabal (2008) and Adebayo (2014) share some semblance with those of Awortu (2015) and Bintube (2015). While the former examines the nexus between the Boko Haram insurgency and underdevelopment in Nigeria, the latter focuses on and limits the analysis to the role of the insurgency in the underdevelopment in northeastern Nigeria. Adenrele (2012) examines the relationship between insurgency and poverty in another dimension. He links insurgency with poverty in the area. Adelaja and George (2019) establish a consensus between the insurgency and the land use act in Nigeria. According to them, the escalation of the war is a result of the land policy currently in effect in the country. The political dimension with which Agbiboa (2013) views the insurgency makes his study utterly different from the current study. According to him, the Boko Haram insurgency has significantly destabilized Nigeria. Awojobi (2014) examines the relationship between insurgency and socioeconomic activities in Nigeria. According to him, the insurgency has disrupted the social life and economic activities of the region under review. Likewise, Enobi and Johnson-Rokosu (2016) discuss the implications of insurgency in the Lake Chad Basin. Focusing on the effect of the insurgency on education, Bertoni, Di Maio, Molini and Nistico (2019) analyze how the insurgency has derailed educational development in the area.

The current study is unique as an attempt to examine the relationship between corruption in Nigeria's defense sector and the escalation of Boko Haram insurgency in northeastern Nigeria. The fascination of the study is a function of the heightened level to which insurgency in the area under study has degenerated and the diversion of a large part of national budgets to its prosecution. The study has observed over the years that despite yearly increases in the budget provision dedicated to the fight against insurgency, insurgent activities in the area have escalated rather than weaning. As a result of this reality, the study hypothesizes thus: the higher the budget provisions, the more insurgent activities are. This hypothesis has informed and raised concerns about this study.

Despite a slew of literature and scholarly works dedicated to studying the Boko Haram insurgency, the relationship between corruption and the escalation of insurgency is hardly featured in the existing literature. If the Boko Haram insurgency is to be examined, scholars should be interested in the corruption dimension as the basis for its escalation and perpetuation. Corruption in the defense sector has implications for the pervasiveness and elongation of the war against insurgency. This is the gap the study intends to fill. The study, therefore, examines the effects of corruption within the defense sector on the fight against the Boko Haram insurgency in northeast Nigeria. In an attempt to achieve the study's objectives, this research will address the following questions: What is the nature of the procurement process for security armaments in the defense sector in Nigeria? What is the relationship between corruption and insurgency in Nigeria? What are the consequences of these processes in the fight against insurgency in Nigeria? The following section aims to extrapolate these questions through a theoretical lens.

Theoretical Foundations of Corruption and Counterinsurgency Financing in Nigeria

The neo-patrimonial framework provides a powerful lens for understanding Nigeria's deeply entrenched relationship between corruption and counterinsurgency financing. This theoretical framework is rooted in Weber's (1968) concept of patrimonialism, which describes a system where governance and leadership rely on personal loyalty and hierarchical patronage rather than institutionalized rules. Neo-patrimonialism expands on this by reflecting the fusion of public and private spheres within governance systems, where state resources are often privatized for the personal benefit of ruling elites (Eisenstadt, 1973; Bratton & van de Walle, 1999). This approach underscores systemic practices such as clientelism, nepotism, and resource misappropriation, particularly prevalent in many African states, including Nigeria (Anders, 2005; Olaniyan et al., 2015).

In the Nigerian context, neo-patrimonialism manifests in the weakening of formal state institutions due to their overlap with informal networks of patronage. These networks often operate to benefit a few at the expense of the broader population, promoting corruption and mediocrity while eroding meritocracy and institutional efficiency (Nkwede et al., 2015). This blending of formal and informal governance undermines accountability and transparency, creating an environment conducive to the mismanagement of public

resources. Neo-patrimonialism thus serves as a crucial framework for examining how governance failures, especially those rooted in corruption and resource mismanagement, have exacerbated the escalation of the Boko Haram insurgency in northeastern Nigeria.

The connection between corruption and the insurgency is not merely incidental but systemic. Theoretical and empirical studies support this linkage, highlighting how the misappropriation of public resources by the ruling elite has hindered Nigeria's ability to address the insurgency effectively. Research by Adenrele (2012), Adeoye (2015), Anyadike (2013), Aro (2013), Arowolo (2013), Awojobi (2014), Ekanem et al. (2012), and Shuaibu et al. (2015) collectively argues that the privatization of public resources for personal enrichment is a defining characteristic of Nigeria's approach to counterinsurgency. Anders (2005) provides further evidence of how neo-patrimonialism facilitates such practices, emphasizing how the diversion of resources for political patronage weakens the state's capacity to address pressing security challenges.

In the Nigerian defense sector, the effects of neo-patrimonial governance are particularly pronounced. Funds allocated for counterinsurgency operations are frequently diverted, leading to inadequate military preparedness, low troop morale, and a lack of essential resources. Adeoye (2015) observes that between 2009 and 2015, these financial and logistical constraints weakened the Nigerian military, enabling Boko Haram to expand its activities and capture significant territory. This systemic mismanagement of counterinsurgency financing underscores the role of neo-patrimonialism in perpetuating governance failures and, by extension, national security crises.

Corruption within defense procurement processes further illustrates the impact of neo-patrimonialism on Nigeria's counterinsurgency efforts. Inflated contracts, the purchase of substandard equipment, and widespread embezzlement undermine the operational efficiency of the military. Ekanem et al. (2012) argue that the inability of the army to mount effective responses to Boko Haram is a direct consequence of governance failures rooted in neo-patrimonial practices. Similarly, Olaniyan et al. (2015) highlight how the mismanagement of funds for security operations perpetuates insecurity, allowing insurgents to exploit governance lapses and expand their influence.

The unchecked spread of Boko Haram underscores the broader implications of neo-patrimonial governance on national security. The systemic diversion of resources for personal or political gain has debilitating consequences for the state's ability to address insurgency effectively. Adeoye (2015) notes that corruption within the military apparatus weakened Nigeria's defense capabilities and created opportunities for insurgents to exploit public grievances and governance failures. This has resulted in significant social and economic dislocations, including mass displacement, widespread unemployment, and acute food insecurity, compounding the humanitarian crisis in the northeast (Awojobi, 2014; Ekanem et al., 2012).

The humanitarian crisis in Nigeria's northeast illustrates the devastating impact of neo-patrimonialism on governance and security. By prioritizing personal and political gain over public welfare, the ruling elite has undermined the state's capacity to address the root causes of insurgency, allowing the conflict to persist and escalate. The personalization of state resources reflects broader governance failures that have hindered Nigeria's efforts to contain the insurgency despite significant financial investments in counterinsurgency operations.

Neo-patrimonialism provides a compelling framework for analyzing the systemic corruption that characterizes Nigeria's counterinsurgency financing. It highlights the intersection of governance practices, resource mismanagement, and insecurity, situating the escalation of Boko Haram insurgency within broader patterns of state dysfunction. By emphasizing the privatization of public resources as a core characteristic of neo-patrimonialism, this framework sheds light on the challenges of addressing insurgency within such a governance context.

While neo-patrimonialism offers valuable insights into the role of elite behavior and patronage systems in perpetuating corruption and insecurity, it is not without limitations. The framework tends to focus primarily on the actions of political elites, often overlooking other critical factors driving insurgency escalation. These include ethnic and socio-cultural divisions, historical legacies of colonialism, and international dynamics such as global diplomacy and the arms trade. Nonetheless, the theory remains a powerful tool for

understanding the systemic misappropriation of public resources and its impact on Nigeria's counterinsurgency efforts.

By situating Nigeria's counterinsurgency challenges within the broader context of neo-patrimonial governance, this framework underscores the urgent need for institutional reforms. Addressing the structural issues that allow corruption to thrive requires a multifaceted approach, including promoting transparency, accountability, and meritocracy in governance. The failure to address these systemic issues undermines Nigeria's counterinsurgency efforts and perpetuates a cycle of governance failures and insecurity, with far-reaching implications for national stability and development.

Contextual Discourse

Corruption is a pervasive issue that significantly erodes governance structures, undermines institutional capacities, and exacerbates socioeconomic inequalities. These systemic vulnerabilities frequently catalyze violent conflicts, particularly in fragile states or those endowed with abundant natural resources (Le Billon, 2001). The detrimental effects of corruption are especially pronounced in the defense sector, where it undermines military operational efficiency, siphons critical resources away from their intended purposes, and fosters a culture of impunity. Such dynamics are highlighted by Raballand and Recanatini (2023), who argue that corruption is both a symptom and a driver of state fragility, ultimately undermining the prospects for sustainable peace and long-term stability. Additionally, Joly (2021) emphasizes that corruption, conflict, and instability are deeply intertwined, with corruption often serving as one of the primary root causes of conflict on a global scale. According to her analysis, corruption cripples national institutions by limiting their capacity to address citizens' needs and stoking grievances that can escalate into widespread unrest. Insurgent groups frequently exploit these grievances and leverage disillusionment and disenfranchisement to bolster their ranks and expand their influence (Mauro, 2017).

In Nigeria, the dual impact of corruption is particularly stark. On one hand, it debilitates the state's ability to address the underlying causes of insurgency; on the other, it provides insurgents with potent propaganda tools to delegitimize the Government. Boko Haram, for

example, has successfully exploited local frustrations stemming from ineffective governance and perceived exploitation by elites. This exploitation is amplified by corruption within the systems responsible for counterinsurgency financing, where critical funds are often mismanaged or embezzled (Arowolo, 2022). The group's ability to tap into such grievances has not only prolonged the insurgency but also further entrenched insecurity and instability across the region.

The cyclical relationship between corruption and conflict is particularly evident in the defense sector, where corrupt practices perpetuate violence by creating economic incentives for key actors to sustain the status quo. In Nigeria, numerous examples illustrate this dynamic. Funds earmarked for counterinsurgency efforts have been diverted through procurement scandals involving arms and equipment, leading to widespread inefficiencies and failures (Dal Bó & Rossi, 2007; Transparency International, 2017). Misappropriating these resources diminishes military readiness and effectiveness, leaving security forces ill-equipped to combat insurgent groups. For instance, soldiers in Nigeria have often faced insurgents equipped with superior firepower, a direct consequence of corruption-fueled mismanagement (Ogala, 2018). The resulting inefficiency prolongs the conflict and erodes public trust in the state's ability to maintain peace and stability. Aldieri et al. (2023) further note that such governance failures undermine the state's legitimacy, making it increasingly difficult to implement effective conflict-resolution measures.

The "resource curse" phenomenon further compounds the corruption-conflict nexus in resource-rich countries like Nigeria. Despite the country's substantial oil revenues, corruption has siphoned these funds away from developmental priorities, redirecting them into private hands and fueling economic disparities (Ross, 2004). This mismanagement stifles economic opportunities and indirectly finances insurgencies by amplifying grievances that insurgents readily exploit. The Nigerian experience exemplifies how resource mismanagement, combined with systemic corruption, creates fertile ground for insurgency and prolonged instability. Although defense budgets have increased significantly in recent years, the persistence of insurgent activities underscores the inefficiency and mismanagement rooted in corruption. This paradox highlights the need for systemic reform within Nigeria's governance and defense structures.

To further illustrate the complexities of corruption within the context of conflict, the next section will delve into specific instances of arms procurement scandals and their implications for national security.

Discussion of instances

Corruption in Nigeria's defense sector is as old as corruption in other institutions of Government. However, the consequences of corruption in the defense sector are even, as they affect every citizen, regardless of their social standing. While it is a general axiom that "security is everyone's business," its meaning might be a function of its consequence. Furthermore, the breakdown of security in any part of the country may hinder socioeconomic activities, causing substantial national income and forcing it to spend more. It may also cause the diversion of funds meant for other areas of the national economy to security. This may contribute to infrastructural decay and worsen unemployment, increasing insecurity. The foregoing observations have analyzed the procurement process necessary:

1. Boat supply saga

Ogala of Premium Times reported that sometime in 2008, Amit Sade, an Israeli contractor, was awarded combined contracts worth over \$3m (Ogala, 2018). According to the report, he was first asked to deliver 'assorted ammunitions' at \$2 million. In addition, he was also asked to supply 20 units of K-38 twin-hull boats at the cost of \$5 million each. Even though he was given a 95% upfront payment to provide the ammunition against the standard practice in contract award, according to the investigation, he delivered 63% of the contract (Ogala, 2018). Similarly, on K38 boats, he was paid 80% upfront but offered a job of only 40% (Ogala, 2018). According to the investigation, Mr. Sade's records showed he was awarded six other military contracts worth \$4 million. Records also indicated that he had failed to deliver them (Ogala, 2018). According to the investigations carried out by multiple sources, and which were supported by the investigation carried out by Transparency International (TI), Nigeria lost a whopping \$15 billion in 20 years in the defense sector through arms deals, which also coincides with the period Boko Haram began its armed campaign (Odunsi, 2017; Ogala, 2018; Sahara Reporters, 2022; TI, 2017; Yakubu &

Falode, 2021). Former Nigeria Vice President, Yemi Osinbajo, corroborated the massive, pervasive corruption in the defense sector when he alleged that \$15bn defense contract was missing and could not be accounted for and that two weeks before the election, 100bn naira (\$50m) and \$295m were used for the re-election bid of the then sitting President under cover of security (Arowolo, 2022; Osinbajo, 2017).

2. Progress Limited gift

Between 2006 and 2010, Nigeria's Ministry of Defence awarded two contracts to Progress Limited. According to the contract details, 42 BRTR-3U armored personnel carriers and spare parts were to be supplied to the Nigerian army. There was no evidence of documented contracts or agreements. The contract seemed to be awarded at a rendezvous without signing any contract agreement between the parties. There was no market survey to reflect the market value of the carriers; out of the required 42 units, 26 units of used armored personnel carriers were supplied, which broke down two years after during its deployment for a peacekeeping operation in Sudan (Ogala, 2018; Sahara Reporters, 2022; Yakubu & Falode, 2021). According to Sahara Reporters (2022), this was a perversion of due process and abuse of office to satisfy a predetermined end of some self-serving top military brass.

3. The Shaldag contracts

This particular shady contract, codenamed "The Shaldag Contract" (Ogala, 2018), was a ship supply contract that had mainly remained phony (Ogala, 2018; Sahara Reporters, 2022). According to the report, the contract betrayed every sense of decorum and patriotism. Transparency International (2017) reports that some few military generals, in connivance with Shaldag, threw caution to the wind and defiled due process in awarding contracts to satisfy their insatiable quest for primitive capital accumulation. They have grown strong, much stronger than the institution to whose dictates they were supposed to submit and within which they were supposed to act (Yakubu & Falode, 2021). The contract deal was about a supply of two fast assault boats, each with a market value of about \$5 million. However, these two boats were supplied at the rate of \$25 million. It was reported that Nigeria lost a whopping \$15 million in the deal (Ogala, 2018). It was not clear how the excess money was shared among the conspirators, but what was however clear was the

arrest of the middleman, Amit Sade, who was alleged to have received \$1.47 million in brokerage fees (Ogala, 2018; Sahara Reporters, 2021; TI, 2017).

4. Cash for black market arms in South Africa

In 2014, \$9.3 million in cash was confiscated from two Nigerians and an Israeli by South Africa border authorities. A private jet owned by a renowned Nigerian pastor was used to ferry the money. The money, stashed in three trunks, was discovered by airport scanners officers (Ogala, 2018). This incident nearly caused a diplomatic row between the South African Government and its Nigeria counterpart after the former rebuffed every entreaty made by the latter for the release of the fund. Customs officers discovered the money hoarded in three suitcases after the bags containing the money were put through airport scanners. Following the confession of the Nigerian Government that the money was meant to procure arms in the black market for the prosecution of the Boko Haram insurgency in northeastern Nigeria, the South African authorities were somewhat adamant that the hard currency beached every known international pact and money laundry act (Ogala, 2018; Sahara Reporters, 2021; TI, 2017). After its release to the Nigerian Government, how the money was later spent remained a mystery, as there was no record of arms purchases with the funds (Ogala, 2018).

5. NIA Ikoyigate

Another flurry of illicit cash discovery was codenamed Ikoyigate in 2017 (Arowolo, 2022). The cash stockpiled in hard currencies of \$43m, £27, 000 and N23m (\$15m) was hidden in a vulgar but well-furnished house at Ikoyi, Lagos (Arowolo, 2022; Bulusson, 2017; Gabriel, 2017). The National Intelligent Agency (NIA) Director later claimed the money was meant for undisclosed exceptional security and defense projects. A whistleblower who discovered the money was awarded some unspecified amount in line with the newly introduced whistleblower policy. The entitlement ranged between 2.5 percent and 5 percent of the amount recovered if they provided the Government with information that directly led to the recovery of stolen or concealed public funds or assets, provided the Government did not already have the information, and it could not have obtained it from any other publicly

available source (Arowolo, 2022). The whistleblower would only get rewarded if the money was recovered because of the information they supplied (Arowolo, 2022).

Corruption, counterinsurgency finance and Boko Haram insurgency in Northeast Nigeria

As had been earlier established in the previous section, the procurement process in Nigeria's defense sector was fraught with irregularities. This section aims to link the elongation of insurgency in the area under study to the shenanigans in the procurement process in the defense sector. Corruption in the defense sector slows down the efforts of men and officers of the armed forces on the battlefield, prolonging the fight against insurgency. Abolurin (2012) substantiated this stance and Jimoh, Olaniyi and Abdulsalami (2017), when they submit that corruption has waned the fight against insurgency and escalated the war. According to them, the corrupt ruling elite and top military brass alike have benefitted from the conflict in the northeast to the very detriment of the peace of Nigeria.

According to the investigation by Transparency International (TI), reported by Daily Trust, Premium Times and Sahara Reporters, \$15 billion was meant for the supply of arms, training of military personnel, allowance of military personnel and food supply in the fight against Boko Haram insurgency had been stolen over some time, leaving the military without cognate arms and ammunition, equipment and needed morale to diligently prosecute the war (Odunsi, 2017; Ogala, 2018; Sahara Reporters, 2022; TI, 2017). Also, a presidential inquiry set up in 2016 indicted the top military brass and their civilian collaborators. It was revealed that fake contracts worth over \$2bn were awarded between 2011 and 2015. These funds were meant to procure ammunition to fight the Boko Haram insurgency (Aljazeera, 2015; BBC News, 2015). Individuals and corporate organizations have also been fingered in the utter diversion or thievery of funds meant to purchase arms and ammunition to prosecute the fight against insurgency in Nigeria (Alemika, 2012; Aljazeera, 2015; BBC News, 2015; Ogala, 2018; TI, 2017).

These irregularities in the procurement process have grave ramifications for the fight against insurgency. Apart from slowing down the war, they could have implications for the

morale of the combatant, depleting their sense of patriotism and commitment to the national cause. They could lead to the deaths of soldiers on the battlefield as a result of being equipped with obsolete ammunition and exposed to starvation. They could also be symbolic, puncturing Nigeria's national ego and pride. In most cases, Boko Haram insurgents had hosted their flag strategically in conquered parts of the northeastern states of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe, and compelled people to pay taxes to them (Abba, 2023; Abubakar, 2023; France24, 2023; Maina, 2021). The malfeasance could also have dire consequences on the economy, as the economic activities in the affected states continue to experience a downward trend, which has a multiplier effect on the national economy, as this could send the youth out of jobs and create unemployment that could further worsen the insecurity situation in the area. This could also encourage the conscription of the youth into insurgency. In addition, this could lead to famine as the affected areas are considered the nation's food basket. Farmers in these areas have been prevented from farming and have mainly been dislodged from their ancestral homes.

The relationship between corruption and inefficiency has been established in the literature by scholars (Aldieri, Barra, Ruggiero & Vinci, 2023; Dal Bó & Rossi, 2007; Chêne, 2014; Kutlu & Mao, 2023; Mauro, 2017; Spyromitros & Panagiotidis, 2022). This reinforces that corruption is inimical to development (Chêne, 2014; Spyromitros & Panagiotidis, 2022). Inefficiency is associated with corruption, which is examined in the enervation of Nigeria's military's capability in its fight against insurgency (Alemika, 2012; Ogbuehi, 2017). This has caused the armed forces to experience a deterioration in the campaign against insurgency and has prolonged the war (Jimoh, Olaniyi & Abdulsalami, 2017).

The depreciation of military capacity that births the elongation of the war is not a function of inadequate budget provisions or funding shortfall. As it would be revealed later, and a validation of the hypothesis earlier mulled by this study, the elongation of the war has a direct relationship with corruption, as more money leads to more corruption, and more corruption leads to escalation of the war. Table 1 below shows yearly military expenditures in the defense sector between 2007 and 2019:

Table 1 Total Military Expenditure between 2007 and 2024

S/n	Year	Defense/Security Spending (\$)	Percentage Increase
1.	2007	0.97b	
2.	2008	1.62b	67
3.	2009	1.50b	-7.4
4.	2010	1.99b	32.7
5.	2011	2.38b	19.6
6.	2012	2.32b	-2.5
7.	2013	2.42b	4.3
8.	2014	2.36b	-2.5
9.	2015	2.07b	-12.3
10.	2016	1.72b	-16.9
11.	2017	1.62b	-5.8
12.	2018	2.04b	25.9
13.	2019	1.86b	-8.8
14.	2020	2.57b	38.2
15.	2021	4.47b	73.9
16.	2022	3.1b	-30.6
17.	2023	2b	-34.5
18.	2024	4b	100

Source: Macrotrends, 2024.

The table above shows the military spending trajectory from 2007 to 2024. There was an increase of 67% in the year 2008 over that of 2007. In 2009, there was a drop in the budget provision, which was recorded as minus 7.4%. The drop in the budget worsened the insecurity in the region. This was the period of armed rebellion against the Nigerian State. This period marked the insurgency escalation in the northeast when the insurgents began to have and use assault rifles and, causing the deaths of both civilians and military personnel (Arowolo, 2013; Arowolo & Akinola, 2018). Military expenditure increased by 32% and 19.6% in 2010 and 2011, respectively, but nosedived in 2012. Military spending was \$2.57b in 2020 and increased to \$4.47b in 2021. From 2020 to 2024, military expenditure was

between \$2.57b and 4b. There was an exponential percentage increase between 2023 and 2024, as the sector gulped \$4b, constituting a 100% increase over the preceding year. Nigeria military spending/defense budget for 2021 was \$4.47 billion, a 73.93% increase from 2020 and was \$2.57 billion for 2020, with a 38.04% increase from 2019 (Macrotrends, 2024).

Between 2019 and 2023 alone, the defense sector increased by 138.4% in five years (Onyedinefu, 2023; Vanguard, 2023). In 2023, the defense sector was allocated 2.98 trillion (\$1.86 billion), constituting 13.4% of the total budget. From the above table, it is revealed that budget provisions and military expenditure radically increased from a paltry \$0.97b in 2007 to \$4b in 2024, yet there was no concomitance between budget provisions and the fight against insurgency in the northeast. The reality betrays the military expenditure on ammunition and other military equipment as the insurgents ravage the region. The resources released so far outweighed the achievements recorded by the Nigerian security agencies led by the military. This is traceable to the endemic corruption in the arms procurement process in the defense sector. There is no corresponding outcome in the fight against insurgency with the substantial financial outlay deployed to the defense sector.

Despite the considerable defense budgets, there have been reports that the Nigerian military is ill-equipped, and this is occasioned by serial casualties suffered by the army on the battlefield. This position was supported by the works of Jimoh, Olaniyi and Abdulsalami (2017), Usman (2017), Sieff (2015), Oriola (2021) and Oriola (2023) when they revealed that soldiers confronting insurgency had limited capacity as a result of obsolete weapons. Money meant to procure arms ended up in private hands, as shown in the previous section. Soldiers had confessed that they lacked modern equipment, the kind that was being used by the insurgents (Sieff, 2015; Toriola, 2021; Toriola, 2023). There were reported cases of mutiny among the rank and file on the battlefield (Ikem, 2023). The insurgents' firepower is more sophisticated than the military's, thereby causing them needless casualties on the battlefield. Reports had it that the insurgents used Browning machine guns, Rocket Propelled Grenades, Night Vision Goggles, AK-49 rifles, Armoured Personnel Carriers, etc, as compared to obsolete AK-47s used by the Nigerian soldiers (Sieff, 2015; Usman, 2017). Corruption has also affected the welfare of security agents on the battlefield. Soldiers themselves complained of poor welfare and poor medical care. Worse still, there

were allegations of neglect of the families of soldiers who died during the war (International Peace Institute, 2019). Not only were the families of fallen soldiers neglected, but the stipends earmarked for the support of the families they left behind were either delayed or not released to them at all (Sieff, 2015; Usman, 2017; Yakubu & Falode, 2021).

This section has established the relationship between corruption and the fight against insurgency in Nigeria. It has also validated its hypothesis that proposes that the more money released to the defense sector, the more corruption it witnesses and the more elongated the war against insurgency. It has also brought the ramifications of corruption in the fight against insurgency.

Conclusion

The study examined the relationship between procurement corruption and the Boko Haram insurgency in northeastern Nigeria. In the attempt to validate its hypothesis, the study showed evidence of a nexus between more military expenditures and inefficiency in the propagation of the war that led to its elongation. The myriad consequences of the procurement sleaze on the nature of the war, the morale of the combatant, depletion of sense of patriotism and commitment to the national cause, deaths and starvation of soldiers on the battlefield, symbolic bruising of national ego and pride, the economy, famine, and insecurity-induced unemployment, were also brought into force. The study identified corruption as the basis for insurgency elongation in the region under scrutiny.

The thesis of the study is that despite the symbiosis between security and national development, peace and security have, nonetheless, continued to elude Nigeria due to pervasive corruption that has elongated insurgency in the northeast. With data gathered from evidence-based research methods and other secondary sources, this study established that despite huge and increased military expenditures, little or no success was recorded in the fight against insurgency, as most of the resources deployed to the battle have either been diverted to private uses or mismanaged by a section of top military class, acting in concert with select members of the ruling elite to satisfy personal ends.

Despite the increase in military expenditures, the war against insurgency is instead observed in defeat. It would seem that an increase in military spending is an increase in the spate of insurgency. This is a puzzle that needs to be unraveled. Why is the Nigerian military experiencing a defeat in its fight against insurgency despite huge financial outlay? The answer is embedded in the conspicuous disconnect in the funding-performance gamut. A holistic approach to the problem is required. In this connection, the study proposes a three-throng solution: institutional, procedural and psychological. Institutionally, there is a need to strengthen anticorruption agencies and increase their presence in the military. Anticorruption units should be established in the military, superior to and independent of the military establishment.

Added to that is the encouragement of country-to-country arrangements in procuring arms and ammunition for the military. This will eliminate the shenanigans in the existing procurement process. Procedurally, the procurement process needs to be sanitized by subjecting the award of the contract to a due process regime. The openness of the contract award process will encourage competitiveness in the bidding process, thereby emphasizing merit and competence in selecting procurement companies. Psychologically, a concerted anticorruption strategy towards tackling the sleaze in the procurement process needs to be developed. This speaks to the emplacement and toughening of punitive measures to discourage and deal with the culprits. This is psychological to the extent of curtailing the proliferation of the scourge. Added to this is an intensifying welfare system to care for those on the waterfront. The reward system should be comprehensive, covering the combatant on the battlefield, postretirement package, and their families, while alive or dead. This will boost their morale and increase their commitment to the national cause. The psychological implication is the assurance of family support in case of death or incapacitation. Finally, there is an urgent need to strengthen institutions. This can be done by entrenching a governance culture of integrity and probity.

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