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A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE RIGHT TO OWN PROPERTY IN NIGERIA IN LIGHT OF RECURRING SECURITY CHALLENGES

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Abstract

This paper critically examines the right to own property in Nigeria within the context of persistent and escalating security challenges. Property rights, recognized under Nigerian law and international human rights frameworks, are fundamental to individual liberty, economic empowerment, and national development. However, ongoing threats such as terrorism, banditry, herder-farmer clashes, kidnapping, and communal violence have increasingly hindered the exercise and enjoyment of this right. This study explores the legal frameworks governing property ownership, evaluates how insecurity affects property utility and profitability, and analyzes the implications on vulnerable groups, particularly farmers, women, and children. It further investigates the response of both government and private individuals, including the costs and sustainability of these measures. The methodology combines doctrinal legal analysis with a qualitative review of secondary data, including legislation, case law, scholarly articles, and reports from governmental and non-governmental sources. The findings reveal that the failure of security systems has led to widespread displacement, loss of livelihood, and weakened property rights enforcement. In response, affected individuals and communities have adopted private security measures, which often lack sustainability and legal oversight. Government interventions remain fragmented and reactive. The paper concludes with practical recommendations for safeguarding property rights in Nigeria, with a focus on enhancing security architecture, policy reforms, and stakeholder collaboration.

Keywords: Property rights, insecurity, Nigeria, land tenure, human rights, legal protection

1. Introduction

In Nigeria, property rights are becoming more threatened by security problems. The country's decades-long insecurity problems, including banditry, kidnapping, and terrorism, have created an environment of uncertainty and dread, undermining the ability of individuals and enterprises to have, use, and enjoy their property without fear. Therefore, property rights, which are vital to economic development and stability, are being undermined. This work addresses the urgent need for prompt solutions to Nigeria's security problems to sufficiently secure the right to property. It will examine the impact of security problems on the right to property in Nigeria, considering how insecurity devalues property ownership, hinders economic activity, and erodes the rule of law, and will provide strategic recommendations for addressing these issues.

2. Overview of the Right to Own Property in Nigeria under the 1999 Constitution and Other Statutes

The right to own property in Nigeria is enshrined in the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999, as amended, and is further extended in other statutes. Pursuant to section 43 of the Constitution, subject to the provisions of this Constitution, every citizen of Nigeria shall have the right to acquire and own immovable property anywhere in Nigeria. Section 44(1) further states that no moveable property or any interest in an immovable property shall be taken possession of

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compulsorily and no right over or interest in any such property shall be acquired compulsorily in any part of Nigeria except in the manner and for the purposes prescribed by a law that, among other things - (a) requires the prompt payment of compensation therefore and (b) gives to any person claiming such compensation a right of access for the determination of his interest in the property and the amount of compensation to a court of law or tribunal or body having jurisdiction in that part of Nigeria. This right to compensation will be further discussed in subsequent sections of the essay.

In addition to the Constitution, the Land Use Act 1978 provides in its section 1, that subject to the provisions of this Act, all land comprising the territory of each State in the Federation is vested in the Governor of that State and such land shall be held in trust and administered for the use and common benefit of all Nigerians in accordance with the provisions of this Act. It additionally provides, in section 9, that it shall be lawful for the Governor (a) when granting a statutory right of occupancy to any person; or (b) when any person is in occupation of land under a customary right of occupancy and applies in the prescribed manner; or (c) when any person is entitled to a statutory right of occupancy, to issue a certificate under his hand in evidence of such right of occupancy. This provision allows for a Nigerian citizen to hold the right of occupancy from the Governor and begins this essay on how this right is protected by the government yet challenged by issues of insecurity.

3. Importance of Property Rights to National Development

The livelihoods of farmers worldwide depend on having safe access to land as a productive resource.[1] Farmers who have secure land rights can labour and invest in their fields knowing that they will benefit from their efforts without worrying about their land being taken away without cause.[2] Therefore, it is believed that both formal and informal land rights are essential to improving the lot of the poor in developing nations with regard to economic growth, agricultural output, food security, management of natural resources, gender inequality, conflict resolution, and local governance procedures in general.[3] Land rights can include different rights to use, own, and/or transfer land, as well as the power to enforce those rights, and employ rules that punish individuals in violation.[4] Improving land rights can take several forms, such as documenting traditional means for establishing personal rights.[5] Reforms that are prioritised by leading bilateral and multilateral development organisations strengthen tenancy security, especially in strategies meant to reduce poverty among women and others who have historically been marginalised in society.[6]

Current studies on the effects of land property rights interventions reveal mixed results, largely due to the initial conditions of land rights: in many cases where rights are already well-established through stable informal and customary frameworks, formalising rights through land titling—one way to strengthen those rights—may not have a substantial impact, while in other cases, such as the Brazilian Amazonian frontier in the early 1990s, efforts to formalise property rights in areas without previous formal institutions are thought to have increased productivity and decreased deforestation.[7] These studies signify that land affects national development, and when the rights to these lands are clarified and protected, national development will be easier to obtain.

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[1] Steven Lawry, Cyrus Samii, Ruth Hall, Aaron Leopold, Donna Hornby and Farai Mtero, 'The Impact of Land Property Rights Interventions on Investment and Agricultural Productivity in Developing Countries: a Systematic Review' (2017) 9(1) *Journal of Development Effectiveness* 61-81 <https://doi.org/10.1080/19439342.2016.1160947> accessed 23 April 2025.

[2] Ibid.

[3] John Bruce, *Simple Solutions to Complex Problems: Land Formalization as a 'Silver Bullet'." In Legalisation of Land Rights, Yes but How? Towards Just Land Governance for Rural Development* (Leiden: University of Leiden Press, 2012).

[4] Ibid.

[5] Lawry et al (n1).

[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid.

4. Brief Background on Nigeria's Recurring Security Challenges

Nigeria has had many security issues, and this has increased since gaining democracy in 1999, such as the Niger Delta problems, kidnappings, the Boko Haram insurgency, and continuous clashes between farmers and herdsmen in the country's north.[8] Particularly, kidnapping has become a serious national security concern.[9] At first, the main targets of kidnapping in the South-East geopolitical zone were prominent people and locals. However, kidnapping became more common after the 2007 General Elections.[10] The individuals who were used as political thugs by dishonest politicians before the elections and who afterward resorted to kidnapping as a survival tactic are partly to blame for this increase.[11] There was a high risk of kidnapping in Abia State, particularly in Aba city and its surrounding areas.[12] This criminal act increased tension in the business district and forced many families to leave their homes. In addition to the people and families who left Aba city for safety, some manufacturing companies moved their operations to safer states like Enugu, Anambra, and Ebonyi.[13] This unpleasant incident had a negative effect on the economy of Abia State specifically and Nigeria generally. Additionally, some Aba city residents lost their jobs, which raised the unemployment rate in Abia State specifically and Nigeria overall.[14]

The killing of innocent Nigerians or residents, the rape of women, and the indiscriminate bombing of large towns, churches, police stations, and public areas (particularly in the northern regions of the country) are some of the atrocities committed by Boko Haram that have caused investors to seriously doubt the safety of their investments in Nigeria.[15] Some analysts who supported the viewpoint claimed that these illegal activities had a detrimental effect on the Nigerian State's economy in addition to harming Nigeria's reputation in the global political sphere.[16] The ongoing unrest brought on by Fulani herdsmen, primarily in the northern region of Nigeria, is yet another unsightly internal security issue that currently plagues the administration and people of that country.[17] The main cause of conflicts between Fulani herdsmen and farmers in Northern Nigeria is the cattle's destruction of their crops and farmland. On the other hand, herdsmen typically face significant challenges from livestock rustlers, or armed cattle robbers, who typically operate out of nearby nations like the Niger Republic, Chad, Cameroon, and others.[18] According to documented evidence, herdsmen began moving around in 2012 to graze livestock while armed and armed with ammunition, and they often attacked civilians.[19] In fact, the majority of Benue, Kaduna, Zamfara, Borno, Yobe, Adamawa, Taraba, and other communities lost their lives and property as a result of these barbaric actions towards the civilian populace, especially farmers. As a result, most communities fled their houses as a result of ongoing conflicts between farmers and herdsmen between 2012 and 2014.[20]

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[8] Chris Nwagboso, 'Nigeria and the Challenges of Internal Security in the 21st Century' (2018) 4(2) *European Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies* 15 <http://dx.doi.org/10.26417/ejis.v4i2.p15-33> accessed 23 April 2025.
[9] Ibid.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Ibid.
[12] SA Ekanem, JA Dada and Bassey Eje, 'Boko Haram and Amnesty: A Philosophical Appraisal' (2011) 2(4) *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 231 -242 <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/334308351_Boko_Haram_and_amnesty_A_philo-legal_appraisal> accessed 23 April 2025.
[13] Nwagboso,(n8).
[14] Ibid.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid.
[17] M Aminu, G Okoh and W Ayodele, '53 Killed by Suspected Herdsmen, Bandits in Taraba, Zamfara, Benue: Death Toll in Ukum Logo LGA Attacks Rises to 66' (*This Day Life* 2018) <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2018/04/13/53-killed-by-suspected-herdsmen-bandits-in-taraba-zamfara-benue/?amp> accessed 23 April 2025.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Ibid.

5. Kinds of Property

There are two kinds of property - real property and personal property. An interest in real estate is known as real property.[21] Typically, this interest is documented in a formal document like a lease or title deed.[22] Therefore, property has a different legal definition than real estate, which is a physical asset. All rights, interests, and advantages associated with real estate ownership are included in real property.[23] Conversely, real estate includes the land itself, everything that is naturally present on or beneath it, and anything that is attached to the property, happening on the ground, as well as everything that is affixed to the land, including structures and property improvements.[24]

Owning an interest in something other than real estate is known as personal property.[25] The items may be intangible (like a patent or debt) or tangible (like a chattel). Interests in items that are not permanently fixed or tied to real land and are typically distinguished by their mobility are referred to as tangible personal property.[26] Interests in tangible, transportable, and identifiable items that the general population considers to be personal, such as appliances, furniture, and collectibles. Ownership of a business's supplies, trade inventory, and operating assets is regarded as personal property.[27] Interests in intangible entities are considered intangible assets.[28] The right to collect a debt and the right to make money out of an idea are two instances of intangible property interests. As opposed to the intangible entity itself, such as the debt or the concept, which is the property and to which value is assigned, it is the right, that is, the ability to recover or make money.[29]

6. Legal and Institutional Frameworks on Property Protection

6.1 Examination of Legal Provisions Protecting Property Ownership

The main legislation governing property ownership in Nigeria is the Land Use Act 1978. Section 14 of the Act provides that subject to the other provisions of this Act and of any laws relating to wayleaves, prospecting for minerals or mineral oils or mining or oil pipelines and subject to the terms and conditions of any contract made under section 8 of this Act, the occupier shall have exclusive rights to the land the subject of the statutory right of occupancy against all persons other than the Governor.

In addition to the above provision, Section 15 provides that during the term of a statutory right of occupancy the holder: (a) shall have the sole right to and absolute possession of all the improvements on the land; (b) may, subject to the prior consent of the Governor, transfer, assign or mortgage any improvements on the land which have been effected pursuant to the terms and conditions of the certificate of occupancy relating to the land. The implication of these provisions is that once an individual is recognised as the owner of a property, such a right is protected, and cannot be claimed by another.

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[21] Charles A Beard, 'An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution' (2016) *The Case Against the Constitution* 31-50 <https://api.taylorfrancis.com/content/chapters/edit/download?identifierName=doi&identifierValue=10.4324/9781315493855-3&type=chapterpdf> accessed 23 April 2025.

[22] International Valuation Standards Committee, 'Property Types' (2003) <https://www.icjce.es/images/pdfs/TECNICA/C02%20-%20IASB/C210%20-%20IVSC%20-%20Normas/05-property_types.pdf> accessed 23 April 2025.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Ibid.

6.2 Laws Empowering the Government and Citizens to Secure Property

In addition to the considered provisions of the Land Use Act regarding the protection of property, there are provisions in the statute which allow for the securing of property by the government and citizens who own property. Section 21 states that it shall not be lawful for any customary right of occupancy or any part thereof to be alienated by assignment, mortgage, transfer of possession, sublease or otherwise howsoever (a) without the consent of the Governor in cases where the property is to be sold by or under the order of any court under the provisions of the applicable Sheriffs and Civil Process Law; or (b) in other cases without the approval of the appropriate local government. This implies that the consent of the State is required, and ensures that individuals only transfer their rights when they want to, and through lawful means. Section 22(1)[30] contains a similar provision, as it states that it shall not be lawful for the holder of a statutory right of occupancy granted by the Governor to alienate his right of occupancy or any part thereof by assignment, mortgage, transfer of possession, sublease or otherwise howsoever without the consent of the Governor first had and obtained. This is not the only ground where the Governor has the right to revoke a right of occupancy, as section 28 provides that it shall be lawful for the Governor to revoke a right of occupancy for overriding public interest.

However, the interests of the citizen are still secured under the Land Use Act, as the Governor cannot arbitrarily revoke such rights. Section 29 (1) provides that if a right of occupancy is revoked, the holder and the occupier shall be entitled to compensation. The interests are further secured against persons who wish to mischievously occupy land, as section 37 provides that if any person other than one in whom any land was lawfully vested immediately before the commencement of this Act enters any land in purported exercise of any right in relation to possession of the land or makes any false claim in respect of the land to the Governor or any Local Government for any purpose under this section he shall be guilty of an offence and liable on conviction to imprisonment for one year or to a fine of N5,000. These provisions ensure that the occupier enjoys his full rights, protected under the law. Article 14 of the African Charter also states that the right to property shall be guaranteed. It may only be encroached upon in the interest of public need or in the general interest of the community and in accordance with the provisions of appropriate laws.

6.3 Role of the Judiciary, Law Enforcement, and Traditional Institutions

Lawyers ensure due diligence, contract drafting, and guiding clients through the complexities of land law, and remain at the heart of land transactions to ensure the protection of property rights, compliance with legal requirements, and adherence to both statutory and customary regimes in the conduct of transactions.[31] In Nigeria, where statutory rights intersect with customary practices, land ownership is frequently complex, so the advice of an experienced lawyer is crucial to a successful transaction.[32]

The first step in due diligence is a title search, which is necessary to determine whether the seller is legally permitted to sell the property and whether it is subject to any liens, mortgages, or any legal actions.[33] Since property conflicts are frequent, especially in places where statutory rules and customary land tenure systems overlap, the significance of title searches cannot be emphasised. Counsel should look for any title papers that are accessible, including the Certificate of Occupancy, and confirm them with the appropriate authorities and land registries.[34] Insufficient due diligence can have disastrous results, including substantial financial loss or drawn-out legal proceedings, as

[30] Land Use Act 1978
[31] Atuegwu Wisdom Tochukwu, 'The Role of Land Law within the Nigerian Legal Profession: Its Significance in the Context of Contemporary Legal Developments' (2024) *SSRN* <https://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.5065573> accessed 23 April 2025.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid.

seen in *Savannah Bank v Ajilo,*[35] where a land deal was declared illegal due to the governor's refusal to provide his approval. The Nigeria Police Act, 2020, Section 4, outlines the responsibilities of the police. Police officers in Nigeria are hired to prevent and detect crime, apprehend criminals, maintain law and order, safeguard people and property, and properly implement any laws and regulations that fall under their purview. Thus, it is the role of the Police to ensure that citizens enjoy their property rights.

7. The International Legal Regime on the Right to Own Property

International law protects the freedom to own property. Article 17 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)[36] stipulates that everyone has the right to hold property alone as well as in collaboration with others, and nobody's property may be taken away from them unilaterally. This provision reveals the position of international law on property rights, as international declarations recognise the need for the enjoyment of these rights. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP)[37] also protects the right to own property, and in Article 26, it provides that laws, traditions, and customs, land-tenure systems, and institutions of indigenous people for resource development and management are all fully recognised. They also have the right to effective measures taken by states to prevent interference, alienation, or infringement on these rights. Article 27 further provides that the lands, territories, and resources that indigenous peoples have historically owned, occupied, or used and that have been taken, occupied, used, or harmed without their free and informed permission must be returned to them, and they are entitled to reasonable and equitable remuneration in cases where this is not feasible. This compensation must be in the form of lands, territories, and resources that are comparable in quality, size, and legal standing, unless the parties willingly agree differently.

8. Insecurity and Its Impact on Property Ownership

8.1 Risks to Farmlands and Farming Communities

The conflict between farmers and herders is still a big problem for Nigeria, and it has taken on extremely dangerous dimensions with unthinkable ramifications for food security.[38] Farmers-herdsmen conflicts are still a major problem in Benue, Plateau, Nasarawa, Niger, Kogi, and other regions.[39] These conflicts are significant in all of these societies because they typically put economic activities like food production at risk, which leads to extreme starvation.[40] These crises now pose numerous risks to the livelihood and means of subsistence of farmers and herders, and they have been shown to have a high potential for intensifying food crises and insecurity, particularly in rural areas where most crises are concentrated, with repercussions felt across the country.[41] Policy gaps, underdeveloped grazing fields, land ownership and use systems, population growth-driven production expansion, global warming, resource competition brought on by poverty, insurgency, armed robbery, corruption, economic sabotage, and environmental degradation have all been identified as contributing factors to the crises.[42]

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[35] [1989] 1 NWLR (Part 97) 305.
[36] Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948
[37] Adopted by the UN General Assembly on 13th September, 2007
[38] Nsikak Mathias Udosen, 'Farmers-Herders Crisis and Food Security in Nigeria: Causes and Implications' (2021) 5(1) *European Journal of Political Science Studies* <http://dx.doi.org/10.46827/ejpss.v5i1.1165> accessed 23 April 2025.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Ibe Eje Thankgod, Angai Ibrahim Ayu, Abdullahi Yusuf Bazza, Eje Patience Odee, Wudaba Lucky Emmanuel and Ishaku Nuhu, 'Pattern and Impact of Conflicts between Farmers and Herders in Riyom Local Government Area, Plateau State, Nigeria' (2017) 5(10) *The International Journal of Humanities & Social Studies* <https://www.internationaljournalcorner.com/ index.php/theijhss/article/view/125588> accessed 23 April 2025.
[42] Ibid.

The February 2016 Agatu Massacre in Benue State is one example of a problem involving farmers and herders in Nigeria.[43] Approximately 7,000 people were forced from their homes, and more than 300 members of the villages were killed. According to accounts, suspected herders killed a large number of people in 10 Agatu communities in almost 2016.[44] House burning, additional rapes, and property claims occurred prior to the killings. The attacks, according to their commander, were retaliation against the Agatu people for killing one of their commanders and taking his cattle in 2013.[45] Most villages have been devastated by the murders of Fulani farmers and herders in recent years, which have forced them off their farms and away from their primary source of income.[46] With the Fulani herders gaining at the farmers' expense, it has become intolerable. Since the herders permit their cows to eat farmer products, the farmers view the herders as threats to their crops and farm products, while the herdsmen attribute the crisis to religious disagreements that led to the death of their cows.[47] Ibrahim and others[48] also note that the conflicts between farmers and herders have caused a sharp increase in the prices of important agricultural exports from the north, such as cowpeas, maize, millet, rice, and sorghum, as well as to the rest of Nigeria, Niger, and Cameroon.

According to Olabode and Ajibabe,[49] crises between farmers and herders also result in a reduction in farm output because farmers are forced to leave their more fertile farmland in order to avoid conflict and death, which causes a large-scale exodus of farmers from their farms due to farm destruction by the encroaching pastoralists. This demonstrates how herder-farmer crises result in unstable farming environments, forced farmer relocation, a rise in the number of widows and orphans, and migration to outlying areas.[50]

8. 2 Impact on Women, Children, and Displaced Persons

Because of the Fulani Herdsmen attack in North-Central Nigeria and the Boko Haram insurgency in the Northeast, the number of internally displaced people in Nigeria is rising.[51] As of May 2014, Nigeria accounted for around 3.3 million IDPs, or 10% of all IDPs worldwide, according to the International Organisation for Migration.[52] Approximately 13.33% of people were displaced as a result of intercommunal conflicts, 0.99% as a result of natural disasters, and 85.68% as a result of Islamist insurgency attacks.[53] According to Adimula,[54] over half of the people living in internally

[43] Nigerianeye, 'List of Dastardly Fulani Herdsmen Attacks on Communities' (2016) <http://www.nigerianeye.com/2016/04/ list-of-dastardly-fulani-herdsmen.html> accessed 23 April 2025.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Ibrahim Muhammed, Abdurrahman Belel Ismaila and Bibi Umar Muhammed, 'An Assessment of Farmer-Pastoralist Conflict in Nigeria Using GIS' (2015) <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/355485039_An_assessment_of_farmer-pastoralist_conflict_in_Nigeria_using_GIS> accessed 23 April 2025.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Abiodun Olabode and Lanre Ajibade, 'Environment Induced Conflict and Sustainable Development: A case of Fulani-farmers' Conflict in OkeEro L.G.A. Kwara state, Nigeria' (2020) 12(11) *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa* 259-262 <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/308078946_ENVIRONMENT_INDUCED_CONFLICT_AND_SUSTAINABLE_DEVELOPMENT_A_CASE_OF_FULANI-FARMERS'_CONFLICT_IN_OKE-ERO_LGAs_KWARA_ STATE_NIGERIA> accessed 24 April 2025.
[50] Edward Danjuma Salifu, Mabel Ukamaka Dimelu, Jane Mbolle Chah, Edwin Mbadiwe Igbokwe and Innocent Enwelu, 'Livelihood Issues in Herdsmen-Farmers' Conflicts Among Farming Communities in Kogi state, Nigeria' (2017) 12(24) *African Journal of Agricultural Research* 2105-2115 <http://dx.doi.org/10.5897/AJAR2017.12319> accessed 24 April 2025.
[51] Endurance Uzobo and Ruth Ebosetale Akhuetie, 'Food Security and Health Challenges among Internally Displaced Persons in Nigeria' (2018) 16(1) *The Nigerian Journal of Sociology and Anthropology* 47-71 <http://dx.doi.org/10.36108/NJSA/ 8102/61(0140)> accessed 24 April 2025.
[52] International Organization for Migration, 'Internally Displaced Population Falls in Mali' (2016) <https://www.iom.int/news/ internally-displaced-population-falls-mali.> accessed 23 April 2025.
[53] Ibid.
[54] B Adimula, 'Opinion: The Plight of Women and Children in Nigeria's IDP camps' (2016) <https://data.unhcr.org/en/news/ 12180> accessed 25 April 2025.

displaced camps are women and children. Women and girls are more likely to experience unwanted pregnancies, unsafe abortions, and maternal morbidity and mortality, according to several studies.[55] In addition, epidemics of cholera, yellow fever, and the recently identified hepatitis E have been documented in IDP and refugee camps throughout Africa.[56]

Children were the victims of all 450 malnutrition-related deaths that were documented in 28 Borno State IDP camps in 2015, according to the Premium Times News and Guardian Newspaper. NEMA's executive director, Mr. Sule Mele, stated that 209,577 children between the ages of one and five were examined for a number of ailments, such as malnourishment, malaria, diarrhoea, and vomiting.[57] According to him, there were roughly 6,444 cases of severe malnutrition in the camps, 25,511 cases with mild to moderate symptoms, and 177,622 cases without malnutrition.[58] These situations reveal the deplorable situations caused by insecurity, and highlight the need to resolve these issues.

8.3 Disruption of Transportation and Logistics

Nigeria has seen an increase in road transport insecurity as kidnappings, armed robberies, ambushes, and roadside murders have become nearly regular occurrences. According to a survey by Beacon Consulting Group,[59] approximately 224 (10.9%) of the nation's attacks took place on the roads, resulting in 330 fatalities and 976 kidnappings. As a result, several roadways have become hotspots for terrorist activity, making them both a death trap for drivers and a constant source of potential victims for various non-state actors. The Beacon Consulting analysis found that about 254 lives were impacted by 42 instances of insecurity on the North Central highways in 2021.[60] In 11 months, from January to November, 71 people were killed and 183 were abducted.[61] According to the results, of all the groups of persons on the north central highways, civilians have been the most affected; about 90.7% of the attacks have targeted civilians.[62]

The number of visitors to the interstate parks has decreased, according to park operators.[63] The rise in road insecurity, particularly on routes heading to other states, has resulted in fewer people travelling to other states.[64] The fear of being kidnapped or killed especially in regions plagued by insecurity have prevented passengers from using the interstate services. Passengers now carefully calculate the costs and benefits of their journeys to assess whether the necessity of travelling justifies the potential for an attack.[65] Some interstate service providers have suffered losses as a result of drivers being abducted and killed in attacks while travelling.[66] Recently, fewer drivers are available to offer the necessary expertise for comfortable transportation. Fare charges are reported

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[55] Alexander Vu, Atif Adam, Andrea Wirtz, Kiemanh Pham, Leonard Rubenstein, Nancy Glass, Chris Beyrer and Sonal Singh, 'The prevalence of sexual violence among female refugees in complex humanitarian emergencies: A systematic review and meta-analysis' (2014) <https//www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4012695/> accessed 25 April 2025.
[56] Ibid.
[57] B Adimula, 'Opinion: The plight of women and children in Nigeria's IDP camps' (n54).
[58] Ibid.
[59] Beacon Consulting Group, 'Nigeria Security Report' (Beacon Consultings, 15 December 2021) <https://beaconconsulting.com.ng/security-reports/> accessed 25 April 2025.
[60] Ibid.
[61] Ibid.
[62] Ibid.
[63] Araoye Olarinkoye Ajiboye, Muhammed Abdullahi and Muhammed Etudaiye Ohida, 'Effects of Insurgency on Road Transport Operation in Niger State, Nigeria' (2023) 5(1) *Port Harcourt Journal of Disaster Risk Management & Development Studies (PJDRMDS)* 61-75 <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/370741590_EFFECTS_OF_INSURGENCY_ON_ROAD_TRANSPORTATION_OPERATIONS_IN_NIGER_STATE_NIGERIA> accessed 25 April 2025.
[64] Ibid.
[65] Ibid.
[66] Ibid.

to have increased as a result of longer travel times, decreased passenger volume, and extortion of money from drivers by security guards who were supposed to provide security. In order to meet operational and extortion costs, operators and drivers are now compelled to raise their prices.[67] The quantity of vehicles accessible for interstate transport service has decreased as a result of vehicle loss from theft or damage/destruction during attacks.[68] These challenges are as a result of insecurity, and affect the rights of the companies to enjoy the benefits which ought to be derived from their company property.

8.4 Economic Consequences: Food Inflation, Rent Instability, and Disrupted Supply Chains

Nigeria's food security dilemma has political repercussions on a worldwide level. Due to the nation's reliance on food imports, local inhabitants find it more difficult to obtain reasonably priced food, rendering it susceptible to changes in global food prices.[69] The Nigerian government is thus under pressure to participate in international talks and apply for food aid, which frequently has political conditions attached. Labour patterns have changed as a result of food insecurity's impact on agricultural livelihoods. Agriculture, which was once the mainstay of the rural economy, is in decline, and many people are leaving the field to pursue new opportunities in the metropolis.[70] As young people abandon farming as an occupation, rural areas are left with aging populations, endangering the viability of agriculture. Over 60% of Nigeria's workforce works in the informal economy, which is where migrants are rapidly joining in urban areas. Poverty and food insecurity are maintained by the generally low-paying and unstable nature of jobs in this sector.[71] The country's labour landscape is altered by this trend towards urban informal jobs as farmland declines, though not always in a positive way.

9. Conclusion and Recommendations

9.1 Conclusion

The security challenges facing Nigeria have profoundly impacted the right to property, creating an environment of uncertainty and fear that undermines the ability of individuals and businesses to safely own, use, and enjoy their property. As insecurity continues to erode property ownership, disrupt economic activity, and undermine the rule of law, it is imperative that effective solutions are implemented to address these challenges. By protecting the right to property, Nigeria can promote economic development, stability, and prosperity, ultimately improving the well-being of its citizens. Therefore, it is necessary for policymakers, stakeholders, and communities to work together to develop and implement strategies that address the root causes of insecurity and safeguard property rights.

9.2 Strategic Recommendations for Safeguarding Property Rights Amid Security Challenges

9.2.1 Strengthen Security Infrastructure and Rural Policing

One of the core aspects of enhancing security infrastructure is the deployment of adequate security personnel and equipment to rural areas. This would enable the police and other security agencies to respond quickly and effectively to security violations, thereby preventing attacks and protecting farmers, their crops, and livestock. In addition, technology, such as surveillance cameras and drones, can be utilised to enhance monitoring and surveillance of the rural areas so that the security agencies can identify any likely security risks and take appropriate action. Additionally, community policing is particularly important in rural communities, where security agencies can engage with local communities

[67] Ibid.
[68] Ibid.
[69] Emmanuel Ojiya, Asom Terwuah and Ashifa Tersugh, 'Food Security and Corruption in Nigeria: The Households' Welfare' (2020) 4(1) *International Journal of Scientific Research in Educational Studies & Social Development* 83–98 <https://doi.org/ 10.48028/iiprds/ijsressd.v5.i1.08> accessed 25 April 2025.
[70] Ibid.
[71] International Labour Organization, 'Employment trends in Nigeria' (2023) <https://www.ilo.org/nigeria> accessed 25 April 2025.

in identifying security issues and formulating effective responses. Community policing has the potential to build trust and collaboration between security agencies and local communities, resulting in better intelligence gathering and response to security threats. Rural policing can be enhanced by establishing community-based security arrangements, such as vigilante groups, that are able to work in conjunction with security agencies in an effort to maintain law and order in the rural communities. These kinds of arrangements can provide additional security cover in areas where there is minimal formal security presence, thereby reducing rural communities' exposure to attacks.

9.2.2 Legal and Policy Reform

To address the pressing issues of insecurity and its impact on property ownership in Nigeria, particularly in the context of the agricultural sector and rural communities, an integrated approach to legal and policy reform is imperative. First, there is a need to review and revisit the Land Use Act of 1978 that assigns all lands to each state's governor and provide stricter directions on land acquisition, ownership, and transfer. Such reforms need to lean towards safeguarding rural people's and farmers' property rights by legally recognizing and confirming customary land tenure systems. In doing this, the government is able to minimise the likelihood of land disputes and ensure proper compensation for the landowners for any acquisition or utilisation of their land for public purposes and punish any interference in the enjoyment of such lands. The government needs to enact and enforce laws specifically aimed at the security challenges facing farmers and herders. Such laws should have provisions that ensure protection of farms, regulate grazing activities, and establish early warning systems for potential confrontations. The government also needs to have policies that promote dialogue and cooperation between farmers and herders, such as establishing grazing reserves and providing access to alternative livelihoods for herders.

9.2. 3 Empower Vulnerable Populations

Another recommendation provided is to empower marginalized groups. A major step in achieving this aim is to formulate policies and programs encouraging women's economic empowerment, such as access to microfinance, vocational training, and business activities. This can help rural women to develop sustainable livelihoods and reduce their vulnerability to poverty and food insecurity. Also, initiatives that promote girls' education and care for children affected by conflict can help break the cycle of poverty and vulnerability.

Furthermore, the government should enhance the protection of property rights, particularly for vulnerable groups, through Land Use Act and other relevant laws reforms. This can help guarantee that landowners, such as rural communities and women, have secure tenure and can be compensated for any public purpose use or acquisition of their land. In areas of conflict, the government should provide humanitarian aid, including healthcare, shelter, and food, to displaced persons and other vulnerable groups. This can help alleviate suffering and guarantee stability in these areas. Additionally, social cohesion campaigns and grassroot community-level reconciliation can further ensure decreasing tensions between groups as well as increasing peace among diverse groups.

9.2.4 Encourage Public-Private Collaboration

To outweigh the challenges of security and protection of property rights, the private sector and government ought to engage in counter-measures construction to secure security services. This can involve providing equipment, training, and logistical support to security organizations. Through cooperation, the private sector and government can develop security in rural areas, reducing risks to farms and farming communities. The government should also collaborate with the private sector to construct infrastructure such as roads and communication networks that are crucial for economic development and security. Private sector investment in the construction of infrastructure can improve rural access since it facilitates easy movement of goods and services and improves security. Secondly, public-private partnerships can be utilized to support agricultural development, which is crucial for economic growth and food security. The government can partner with private sector companies in a bid to provide farmers with access to credit, extension services, as well as inputs. This will involve the creation of agricultural insurance schemes, which can be used to reduce the risks associated with farming. By supporting agricultural development, the private sector and government can help improve food security, poverty alleviation, and economic growth.