

Civilian Participation in Security Stability: Case Study of Civilian Joint Task Force in Borno State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study explored civilian involvement in providing security and supporting the stability of Borno state in Nigeria, specifically by examining the Civilian Joint Task force (CJTF)'s role in this area. The purpose of this study included to describe how much civilians are involved in security related activities and to measure the effect of their involvement on the overall security situation. Additionally, it attempted to determine what issues or barriers may be present when considering the participation of civilians in providing security. In addition to using a descriptive type of survey research methodology, data collection took place utilizing a total sample size of 345 CJTF participants, security personnel and residents. Data analysis utilized both descriptive statistical techniques and multiple regressions to analyze the data. The results indicate that there was a significant improvement in enhancing security stability due to increased ability for intelligence gathering, increased ability for surveillance, and enhanced community-based monitoring capabilities. Furthermore, findings also supported that there is an extremely high correlation between civilian participation and security stability ($R^2 = .61$, $p < .05$), however several issues including lack of adequate training, lack of effective logistical support, and lack of institutional support to aid in operational efficiency were identified.

Keywords: *Civilian Participation, Security Stability, CJTF, Counterinsurgency, Borno State, Community Security*

1. INTRODUCTION

Security Stability has become a central theme in contemporary global policy debates and academic research in recent years. This is no longer simply an abstract issue concerning state sovereignty. Rather, it has become a daily lived experience for many communities around the world. While security stability is frequently referred to in an informal way, it can be understood in a more specific academic sense as the persistent situation in which a state or society retains the capability to defend itself against, manage and recover from, threats to peace, order and individual safety. This will require the utilization of an integrated approach to utilize effective institutional, social and cooperative processes (Buzan & Hansen, 2020; UNDP, 2022). As such, while the absence of violence is one component of security stability, other important elements include resilience, community trust, institutional efficiency, and participatory governance. These elements demonstrate that security stability is at once a social and structural process. Thus, security stability can only be achieved through some degree of coercion used by the state, but also requires the active involvement of the civilian population.

There are currently large-scale asymmetric conflicts and terrorist actions occurring throughout the world. There are continuing reports of internal conflicts. Consequently, there are numerous barriers to achieving long-term peace. The most notable example of this is illustrated by the findings of the Global Terrorism Index (2024). It reports that over 8,000 individuals lost their lives due to terrorism related incidents in 2023 alone. Conflict driven regions account for approximately 90% of all terrorism related deaths. Non-state armed organizations continue to proliferate throughout the world and combined with poorly governed institutions in fragile states

has made it difficult to develop traditional security frameworks based primarily upon centralized military action (Institute for Economics and Peace, 2024). Examples of areas where community-based security initiatives are being developed in addition to traditional security frameworks include various locations in Africa and parts of Asia (Kaldor, 2021).

Africa's security environment has been particularly unstable. Many countries in Africa are experiencing conflicts such as insurgencies, ethno-religious conflicts and transnational crime networks. For example, the Sahel region has experienced an unprecedented increase in violent extremist activity resulting in nearly 40% of all terrorist deaths globally (African Union, 2023). Due to ongoing insurgent activity, countries such as Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger have had difficulty maintaining control over their territory. This illustrates the limitations of using conventional military strategies. Several African countries are increasingly turning to community-based security initiatives due to recognition that local knowledge and civilian cooperation are essential when dealing with insurgent threats (Aning & Edu-Afful, 2021). The current security environment in Nigeria makes it an especially interesting example of the larger African security crisis. Since the beginning of the last decade Nigeria has faced a myriad of different types of security challenges. Some examples include terrorism in northern Nigeria; banditry in northwestern Nigeria; farmer/herder conflicts in middle Nigeria; and separatist movements in southeastern Nigeria. The Boko Haram insurgency began in 2009 and since then over 35,000 individuals have died and over two million individuals have been displaced. Borno State has borne the brunt of this destruction (International Crisis Group, 2022). Although Nigeria has invested considerable resources in military interventionism, including establishing the MNJTF, the fact that attacks, kidnappings, and territorial incursions are still taking place suggests that this problem is far from being solved.

Given the extensive rural areas found in Borno State and inadequate formal security capabilities to adequately monitor them, an alternative mechanism for responding to the threat became necessary. Given these conditions a grass roots-based security initiative known as the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) emerged. The CJTF consists of mostly local volunteers who utilized their familiarity with the terrain and their social networks to identify and respond to insurgent activity. The CJTF has provided intelligence information regarding insurgent activity, monitored local communities for signs of potential insurgent activity and assisted government forces with their operations. Together they have contributed to the retaking of numerous previously insurgent controlled territories (Agbiboa, 2022; Onuoha, 2020).

Generally speaking, joint task force refers to a multi-partnered collaborative security effort consisting of multiple entities working collectively toward a single operational objective (NATO, 2021). However, the CJTF is a unique localized iteration of this concept. It is characterized by civilian leadership in security enforcement. The type of participation that CJTF members engage in is not merely supplementary but represents a type of hybrid security governance. Hybrid security governance refers to a scenario in which state-based actors and non-state-based actors' function collaboratively and share responsibilities within a single conceptual framework (Adewumi, 2023).

Both practical and theoretical rationales exist for why civilians should participate in security functions. From a practical perspective, civilians possess contextual knowledge about their respective geographic locales that often does not reach formal security agencies -- especially in conflict-ridden areas where combatants are embedded within local populations (Okpa et al, 2026).

In theory, Participatory Security fits into the Human Security Paradigm which emphasizes protecting people and their communities as key to National Stability. There has been some research into Community Based Security Initiatives showing they can increase Trust, Information Flow and Legitimacy of Security Operations (Okoli & Iortyer, 2021; Agbiboa, 2022) but these types of Initiatives do come with Challenges including Accountability Issues, Human Rights Violations and Vigilantism. Although there is an increasing amount of literature around Security Governance and Counter-Insurgency Strategies, it still lacks research to understand the nuances of civilian led security groups such as the CJTF in providing long term

stability to achieve Sustainable Peace. Most existing research on security governance has focused on Military Strategies and Broad Policy Frameworks and neglected the Micro-Level Dynamics of Civilian Participation and the Implications for Sustainable Peace (Aning & Edu-Afful, 2021; Onuoha, 2020). There also is little empirical research on how these groups affect Post Conflict Recovery, Social Cohesion and Institutional Trust especially in relation to Borno State.

This lack of Research is important because of the changing landscape of Contemporary Security Threats that will be addressed using Adaptive Inclusive Solutions that need to fit the specific Contextual Setting. Therefore, this study will attempt to fill this Gap by Investigating through Critical Analysis the Role of the Civilian Joint Task Force in Promoting Security Stability in Borno State. This Study will analyze the findings from Local Realities as well as Broader Theoretical Frameworks in order to provide a more Comprehensive Understanding of how Civilian Participation can Support Formal Structures of Security in Addressing Complex Security Threats.

Statement of the Problem

Traditional state-centred security frameworks have proven ineffective in protecting individuals from current threats of insecurity across the globe — especially in insecure and fragile regions affected by conflict. In Borno State, Nigeria, Boko Haram's ongoing insurgency continues to expose weaknesses of traditional security institutions. Although there have been significant military efforts and the presence of special task forces, Boko Haram continues to carry out violent acts against civilians, kidnaps them and displaces them. Thus, it appears that the current security model lacks sufficient depth to address the complex causes of the conflict (International Crisis Group, 2022).

A significant issue is the perceived distance between local communities and the formal security institutions responsible for their protection. Local communities do not always report information related to the threat of terrorism to formal security agencies in time due to distrust (Abang et al., 2026). In many parts of Borno State, where both formal security institutions operate at full capacity and/or lack the local knowledge necessary to find the deep-rooted terrorist networks located in rural and semi-rural areas, local communities feel vulnerable and less likely to support security stabilization.

As a result of these problems, the emergence of the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF), a community-based security initiative, offers an additional approach to managing insecurity. Although CJTF has assisted in providing intelligence to assist in planning military operations, the impact of CJTF is not fully understood relative to the overall process of establishing long-term security stability. Little empirical evidence exists on the long-term effects of using community-based approaches to manage terrorism. Concerns surrounding accountability mechanisms, cooperation with formal security organizations and possible human rights abuses continue to pose issues concerning the feasibility and sustainability of CJTF (Okoli & Iortyer, 2021).

Additionally, another significant void in the literature surrounds the lack of an integrated and analytical examination of how civilian engagement impacts key aspects of security stability, including community confidence in government, legitimacy of government institutions and post-conflict reconstruction. Current literature generally focuses on either military strategy or broad counterinsurgency models and does not emphasize local civilian-led security initiatives. Given the growing acknowledgement that sustainability cannot occur in terms of security absent the active engagement of local populations, this gap presents a substantial opportunity for improvement.

The implications of this problem are significant. Instability in Borno State is impacting not only the lives of those living there but also is hindering economic growth, distorting governance

systems, creating cycles of violence and limiting future development opportunities. Therefore, until the contribution of civilian engagement in supporting national security is clearly understood, policy makers are likely to respond inadequately to these problems.

This research therefore attempts to empirically investigate the impact of civilian engagement on security stability with a focus on CJTF within a counterinsurgency and community-based security environment.

Aims and Objectives of Research

The purpose of this research is to investigate how civilian engagement contributes to enhancing security stability within Borno State with a particular reference to CJTF as part of counterinsurgency and community-based security frameworks. In order to fulfill the purposes outlined above, this research has several specific objectives:

- i. To analyze the degree and type of civil society participation in security-related operations via CJTF in Borno State.
- ii. To investigate the effect that CJTF's activities had upon improving security stability in Borno State.
- iii. To evaluate the limitations/challenges connected with community participation in all forms of security-related decision-making processes in Borno State.

Research Questions

The following questions guided the study.

- i. What is the level and form of civil society participation in security related activities through CJTF in Borno State?
- ii. How much did CJTF contribute to improve security stability in Borno State?
- iii. What are some of the main limitations/obstacles encountered by community participation in decision making processes in regards to all forms of security-related decisions in Borno State

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested.

H₀₁: There is no statistically significant relationship between the participation of civilians (Civilian Joint Task Forces) and security stability in Borno State.

H₀₂: The operations of the Civilian Joint Task Force have no statistically significant impact on improving intelligence collection and detecting threats in Borno State.

H₀₃: No statistically significant obstacles exist that hinder the effective operation of civil involvement in security management in Borno State.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Concept of security stability

The concept of security stability has evolved from a narrow, state-centric focus on territorial defence and military strength to a broader understanding that incorporates human security, institutional resilience, and socio-political cohesion. In contemporary security studies, it refers to the sustained capacity of a state or society to maintain peace, manage threats effectively, and ensure the safety and well-being of its population (Buzan & Hansen, 2020; UNDP, 2022). Rather than simply the absence of conflict, security stability emphasizes continuity, predictability, and resilience within the security environment, where institutions and communities are able to respond to threats without systemic breakdown (Paris, 2020).

In modern discourse, security stability is closely linked to human security, which prioritizes

freedom from fear, freedom from want, and dignity of life. This implies that economic, social, and political conditions are central to maintaining stability, as insecurity in any of these areas can trigger wider instability (World Bank, 2023). In fragile contexts such as Nigeria, and particularly Borno State, insecurity driven by insurgency, weak institutions, and socio-economic deprivation demonstrates that stability is multi-dimensional and requires more than military responses. Consequently, achieving security stability depends on strong institutions, social cohesion, resilience, participatory governance, and legitimacy, all of which work together to create sustainable peace and prevent the recurrence of violence (OECD, 2021; Kaldor, 2021).

Theoretical Framework

In examining civilian participation in security stability, one theoretical perspective that offers a particularly relevant analytical lens is the **Human Security Theory**, originally popularized by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in its 1994 Human Development Report and further refined in subsequent scholarly and policy works (UNDP, 2022). Although its foundational articulation predates the contemporary period, the theory has been significantly expanded and applied in recent studies between 2020 and 2026, especially in relation to conflict-affected societies and community-based security frameworks.

Human Security Theory shifts the focus of security analysis from the traditional state-centric model, which emphasizes territorial defense and military strength, to a people-centered approach that prioritizes the protection and empowerment of individuals and communities. The core argument of the theory is that true security is achieved not merely through the absence of war, but through the presence of conditions that guarantee freedom from fear, freedom from want, and freedom to live in dignity (UNDP, 2022). These three pillars encapsulate a broader understanding of security that integrates economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community, and political dimensions.

The content of the theory suggests that threats to security are multidimensional and interconnected, requiring comprehensive responses that go beyond military interventions. For instance, insecurity may arise from poverty, unemployment, social exclusion, weak governance, or environmental degradation, all of which can create conditions conducive to conflict and instability (Asuquo et al, 2024). Consequently, the theory advocates for inclusive strategies that involve multiple stakeholders, including governments, civil society, and local communities, in addressing these underlying causes of insecurity (Kaldor, 2021; World Bank, 2023).

A central implication of Human Security Theory is that sustainable security cannot be achieved without the active participation of the people who are directly affected by insecurity. This implies that civilians are not merely passive recipients of protection but are active agents in the production of security. The theory, therefore, supports the integration of community-based approaches into formal security systems, emphasizing collaboration, trust-building, and local ownership of security initiatives. It also highlights the importance of legitimacy and accountability in security governance, as the effectiveness of security measures depends largely on the confidence and cooperation of the population.

In the context of this study, the relevance of Human Security Theory is particularly evident in its emphasis on civilian participation as a critical component of security stability. The emergence of the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) in Borno State reflects the practical application of this theoretical perspective, as local communities have taken active roles in addressing security challenges that formal institutions alone have been unable to resolve. By leveraging local knowledge, social networks, and community trust, the CJTF embodies the principles of human security, demonstrating how civilian involvement can enhance intelligence gathering, improve responsiveness, and strengthen resilience against threats.

Furthermore, the theory provides a useful framework for analyzing the effectiveness and limitations of civilian participation in security management. It allows the study to assess not only

the operational contributions of the CJTF but also its impact on broader aspects of security stability, such as community cohesion, institutional trust, and post-conflict recovery. In doing so, it bridges the gap between theoretical understanding and empirical realities, offering a comprehensive approach to examining security challenges in Borno State.

In sum, Human Security Theory offers a robust and relevant framework for understanding the dynamics of civilian participation in security stability. Its emphasis on people-centered approaches, multidimensional threats, and inclusive governance aligns closely with the objectives of this study, making it an appropriate theoretical foundation for analyzing the role of the Civilian Joint Task Force in promoting sustainable security in Borno State.

3. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study adopts a descriptive research design, which allows for the systematic collection and analysis of numerical data in order to examine the relationship between civilian participation and security stability in Borno State. The design is appropriate as it facilitates objective measurement and hypothesis testing through statistical techniques.

Area of the Study

The study is conducted in Borno State, Nigeria, which remains the focal point of insurgency activities and the operational base of the Civilian Joint Task Force. The choice of this area is informed by its relevance to the research problem and the visibility of civilian participation in security operations.

Population of the Study

The population of the study consists of 2,500 respondents, drawn from three key groups:

- Members of the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF)
- Security personnel
- Civilian residents in affected communities

Table 3.1: Population Distribution

S/N	Category	Population
1	CJTF Members	1,000
2	Security Personnel	500
3	Civilian Residents	1,000
	Total	2,500

Sample Size Determination (Taro Yamane Formula)

The sample size is determined using the **Taro Yamane (1967) formula** which produced 345.

Sample Size Distribution

The sample size is proportionally distributed across the population categories:

Table 3.2: Sample Size Distribution

S/N	Category	Population	Sample Size
1	CJTF Members	1,000	138
2	Security Personnel	500	69
3	Civilian Residents	1,000	138
	Total	2,500	345

Sampling Technique

The study employs a **stratified sampling technique**, which ensures that all key groups within the population are adequately represented. Each stratum is sampled proportionally based on its size.

Method of Data Collection

Primary data are collected through the use of **structured questionnaires**, designed to capture responses on civilian participation, security operations, and stability outcomes.

Instrument for Data Collection

The main instrument used is a **Likert-scale questionnaire**, divided into sections aligned with the research objectives.

Validity and Reliability of Instrument

The instrument is validated through expert review to ensure that it accurately measures the variables of interest. Furthermore, the reliability of the instrument was tested using **Cronbach's Alpha**, and the coefficient value of 0.82 indicated consistency in responses, as recommended by (Uford, 2017).

Method of Data Analysis

Data are analyzed using both:

- **Descriptive statistics** (frequency, percentage, mean)
- **Inferential statistics** (regression analysis for hypothesis testing)

Ethical Considerations

Ethical standards such as informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation are strictly observed.

4. RESULTS

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 4.1: Distribution of Respondents by Category

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
CJTF Members	138	40.0
Security Personnel	69	20.0
Civilian Residents	138	40.0
Total	345	100

Interpretation:

The distribution shows an equal representation of CJTF members and civilian residents (40% each), while security personnel constitute 20%. This ensures balanced perspectives from both operational actors and affected community members.

Table 4.2: Gender Distribution of Respondents

Gender Frequency Percentage (%)

Male	218	63.2
Female	127	36.8
Total	345	100

Interpretation:

The majority of respondents are male, reflecting the security-sensitive nature of CJTF operations where male participation is more prevalent.

Table 4.3: Age Distribution of Respondents

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
18–25 years	72	20.9
26–35 years	141	40.9
36–45 years	82	23.8

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
46 years and above	50	14.4
Total	345	100

Interpretation:

The majority of respondents fall within 26–35 years, indicating that active youth participation dominates CJTF and community security engagement.

Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables

Table 4.4: Descriptive Statistics of Key Variables (N = 345)

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
Civilian Participation (CP)	3.87	0.78	High participation
Security Stability (SS)	3.72	0.81	Moderately high stability
Intelligence Gathering (IG)	3.69	0.74	Effective
Operational Challenges (CH)	3.45	0.88	Moderate challenges

Interpretation:

The results indicate that civilian participation in security operations is relatively high. Security stability and intelligence gathering are also rated above average, suggesting that CJTF contributes positively to security management in Borno State. However, operational challenges remain moderate, indicating existing structural and logistical constraints.

Research Question 1:

What is the nature and extent of civilian participation in security operations through CJTF?

Findings show a **high level of participation (Mean = 3.87)**, particularly in intelligence sharing, surveillance, and community patrol support. Respondents confirm that CJTF plays an active grassroots security role.

Research Question 2:

To what extent have CJTF activities contributed to security stability in Borno State?

The mean score for security stability (**3.72**) indicates that CJTF operations have significantly improved local security conditions, reduced insurgent infiltration, and enhanced early warning systems.

Research Question 3:

What are the major challenges affecting civilian participation in security management?

Challenges identified include inadequate training, lack of protective equipment, and limited institutional support. The moderate mean score (**3.45**) confirms that while CJTF is effective, operational constraints persist.

Test of Hypotheses (Regression Analysis)

A multiple regression model was used:

Model:

$$SS = \beta_0 + \beta_1 CP + \beta_2 IG + \beta_3 CH + \varepsilon$$

Table 4.5: Regression Results

Variable	Beta (β)	Std. Error	t-value	p-value	Decision
Constant	1.21	0.34	3.56	0.001	—

Variable	Beta (β)	Std. Error	t-value	p-value	Decision
Civilian Participation (CP)	0.52	0.06	8.67	0.000	Significant
Intelligence Gathering (IG)	0.41	0.07	5.86	0.000	Significant
Challenges (CH)	-0.28	0.05	-5.12	0.000	Significant

Model Summary:

- $R = 0.78$
- $R^2 = 0.61$
- Adjusted $R^2 = 0.59$
- F-statistic = 89.34 ($p < 0.001$)

Interpretation of Regression Results

The model explains **61% of the variation in security stability**, indicating strong explanatory power.

- **H₀₁ is rejected:** Civilian participation significantly improves security stability ($\beta = 0.52$, $p < 0.05$).
- **H₀₂ is rejected:** CJTF activities significantly enhance intelligence gathering ($\beta = 0.41$, $p < 0.05$).
- **H₀₃ is rejected:** Challenges significantly affect effectiveness, but negatively ($\beta = -0.28$, $p < 0.05$).

This confirms that civilian participation plays a statistically significant role in enhancing security outcomes in Borno State.

Discussion of Findings

The findings align with the view that community-based security systems are essential in asymmetric conflict environments such as Borno State. The significant positive relationship between civilian participation and security stability confirms that grassroots intelligence and local knowledge enhance counterinsurgency effectiveness.

The CJTF's role in intelligence gathering supports earlier observations that local actors provide timely and actionable intelligence that formal security agencies may lack due to geographical and social limitations. However, the presence of operational challenges suggests structural weaknesses such as inadequate training, lack of formal recognition, and insufficient resources.

The negative effect of challenges indicates that while CJTF is effective, its sustainability depends on institutional support and policy integration. Without addressing these constraints, the long-term efficiency of civilian participation in security governance may be undermined.

Overall, the study demonstrates that civilian participation is not only relevant but critical to achieving sustainable security stability in conflict-affected regions such as Borno State.

5, CONCUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusion

The study concludes that civilian participation, particularly through the Civilian Joint Task Force, plays a critical and indispensable role in enhancing security stability in Borno State. The CJTF has proven to be an effective grassroots security structure that complements formal security agencies in combating insurgency and improving intelligence gathering. However, despite its positive contributions, the effectiveness of civilian participation is constrained by institutional, operational, and logistical challenges. These limitations reduce efficiency and pose risks to sustainability. Therefore, while civilian participation remains a vital component of security governance in conflict-affected regions, its effectiveness depends largely on structured support, training, and integration into formal security frameworks.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. The government and security agencies should formally integrate the Civilian Joint Task Force into the national security framework to enhance coordination and effectiveness.
2. Regular training and capacity-building programs should be provided to CJTF members to improve operational efficiency, intelligence handling, and human rights compliance.
3. Adequate logistics, equipment, and welfare packages should be provided to motivate civilian volunteers and reduce operational constraints.
4. Strong monitoring and accountability mechanisms should be established to ensure that civilian participation does not lead to abuse of power or security violations.
5. Community engagement strategies should be strengthened to sustain collaboration between civilians and formal security agencies.

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