The Effectiveness of Green Militarization in Enhancing Uganda's National Security in Mt. Elgon Region, Eastern Uganda

By

Otango Steven

International Relations' Scholar

Islamic University in Uganda

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Department of Political Science

Email: otango_steven@yahoo.com

Luwemba Musa Maswanku

Islamic University In Uganda

Faculty Of Arts And Social Sciences

Department Of Political Science

Email:luwemba.musa@iuiu.ac.ug

Ssali Muhamad Bisaso

Islamic University In Uganda

Faculty Of Education

Department Of Education management and Administration

Email:bisasossali@iuiu.ac.ug

Abstract

This article examines the role of green militarization—the strategic deployment of military and paramilitary forces in support of environmental conservation—and its effectiveness in enhancing Uganda's national security, with specific reference to the Mt. Elgon region in Eastern Uganda. Situated within a context of historical insurgency, illegal natural resource exploitation, and persistent human–wildlife conflict, the study adopts a mixed-methods sequential exploratory design. Qualitative data were collected through key informant interviews and focus group discussions, followed by a quantitative survey administered to 100 respondents from communities adjacent to Mt. Elgon National Park. Findings indicate that green militarization has contributed significantly to the reduction of illegal logging, poaching, and armed group activity, thereby strengthening territorial control and ecological integrity. However, the study also identifies challenges related to community–security relations, livelihood restrictions, and capacity gaps among security personnel. The article argues that green militarization is most effective when implemented through integrated frameworks that combine enforcement with community participation, joint training, benefit-sharing mechanisms, and inclusive governance structures. Such an approach enhances both ecological sustainability and comprehensive

national security. The study demonstrates that green militarization has played a critical role in enhancing Uganda's national security by safeguarding ecologically strategic landscapes, disrupting organized environmental crime, and reinforcing state authority in previously contested spaces such as the Mt. Elgon region. While enforcement-driven conservation has yielded measurable ecological and security gains, its long-term effectiveness depends on the extent to which it is embedded within inclusive, participatory, and development-oriented frameworks. A positive and sustainable model of green militarization requires structured joint training programs that equip security forces, conservation authorities, and community actors with skills in ecological management, conflict resolution, and civil–military cooperation. Furthermore, equitable benefit-sharing mechanisms derived from conservation revenues, alongside institutionalized multi-stakeholder dialogue platforms, are essential for building trust and legitimacy. When aligned with human security principles, green militarization emerges not as a coercive tool but as a collaborative governance strategy that integrates environmental protection with national security imperatives. The study therefore concluded that adaptive, community-sensitive green militarization offers a viable pathway for achieving sustainable conservation outcomes and resilient national security in Uganda and comparable contexts.

Keywords: Green Militarization, National Security, Conservation, Mt. Elgon, Uganda, Human Security.

Empirical Review

Empirical research on the strategy of "green militarization" which implies the deployment of state military and paramilitary forces for environmental control in Uganda's Mt. Elgon region reveals a deeply contested and dualistic set of outcomes. Studies consistently indicate that this approach has achieved measurable tactical successes in immediate conservation and security objectives but has simultaneously generated significant negative externalities that potentially undermine long-term, holistic national security. The empirical literature thus paints a picture of effective coercion at the expense of legitimacy and human security.

The most cited positive outcomes center on the suppression of immediate threats. Research by Twongyeirwe & Nsabagasani (2020) documents a sharp, statistically significant decline in large-scale illegal timber harvesting and elephant poaching in Mt. Elgon National Park following the permanent deployment of the Uganda Peoples' Defence Forces (UPDF) in support of the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA). This finding is corroborated by Vetukuri & Ocheing (2019), whose spatial analysis of forest cover loss rates showed a stabilization in corridors previously ravaged by commercial loggers. From a counter-insurgency perspective, the work of Mukwaya (2018) empirically links the UPDF's operations to the degradation of the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) and local militia networks that used the forest as a safe haven, thereby enhancing the state's territorial control. These studies collectively affirm that militarization can effectively assert physical dominance over a contested landscape, aligning with the state's narrow definition of security as control.

However, a robust body of empirical work highlights severe socio-ecological costs and counterproductive effects. A pivotal study by Kyalimpa (2021) employed household surveys (N=300) in communities adjacent to the park, finding that 73% of respondents perceived an increase in human rights abuses—including arbitrary detention, extortion, and physical violence—by state security actors. This corrodes the social contract, a core component of national security. Furthermore, research by Banana et al. (2022) demonstrates that the militarized barrier has catastrophically disrupted traditional livelihood systems. Using ethnographic methods, they detail how the criminalization of all forest access has eliminated critical safety-net resources for the Benet and Sabiny peoples, exacerbating food insecurity and poverty—key drivers of instability. This creates a perverse cycle: as desperation increases, so does incentive for illicit, small-scale resource extraction, which then justifies further militarized crackdowns.

The mechanisms of ineffectiveness are empirically detailed. Studies indicate that the military's training and culture are often mismatched with community engagement and nuanced environmental law enforcement. Ojok (2021) notes, through participant observation with UWA ranger patrols, that joint UPDF-UWA operations frequently prioritize forceful apprehension over conflict de-escalation or dialogue, inflaming local resentment. This empirical observation challenges the assumption that military efficiency translates to effective governance. Moreover, Nabulya & Mugagga's (2023) comparative analysis of Mt. Elgon and the non-militarized Echuya Forest Reserve suggests that community-based conservation models yielded higher levels of local compliance and ecological monitoring at a lower social cost, though they were less effective against organized armed incursions.

The literature also reveals a critical gap between state and human security outcomes. While national datasets may show improved forest cover and reduced insurgent activity (state security), localized empirical studies reveal deterioration in human security. A 2022 mixed-methods study by the Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment found that fear and mistrust of state authorities had increased, reducing community cooperation in reporting genuine external security threats and creating an information vacuum that ultimately weakens the state's intelligence footprint. The empirical review underscores that green militarization in Mt. Elgon is a double-edged sword. The evidence is clear on its effectiveness in

achieving securitization—making the environment an object of state military strategy. However, its effectiveness in enhancing comprehensive national security—which encompasses stable state-society relations, human security, and sustainable livelihoods—is highly questionable. The empirical record shows that the strategy manages immediate symptoms (illegal logging, insurgency) while risking the aggravation of root causes (poverty, marginalization, grievance). Future research requires longitudinal studies to track whether the short-term tactical gains can be sustained without triggering a backlash that ultimately compromises the region's long-term stability.

Findings and Discussions

Respondents were asked about the Effectiveness of Green Militarization in Enhancing Uganda's National Security in Mt. Elgon Region, Eastern Uganda and their responses can be as presented in the table 1.1

Table 1.1 showing the Effectiveness of Green Militarization in Enhancing Uganda's National Security in Mt. Elgon Region, Eastern Uganda.

Parameter	SA	A	SD	D	NS
Green Militarization strategies promote collaboration between security forces and local communities for ecological conservation	67(67%)	13(13%)	2(2%)	8(8%)	10(10%)
Green Militarization effectively balances conservation priorities with the needs of local communities	56(56%)	34(34)	0(0%)	8(8%)	2(2)
The enforcement of conservation laws by security personnel has not led to long-term ecological improvements in the Mt. Elgon region	7(7%)	6(6%)	66(66%)	4(4%)	13(13%)
The involvement of security forces (UWA and	69(69%)	13(13%)	8(8)	10(10%)	0(0%)

UPDF) in conservation efforts has improved the overall ecological health of Mt. Elgon National Park					
Green Militarization has significantly increased illegal activities such as deforestation and poaching in the Mt. Elgon region.	5(%)	9(%)	68(68)	12(12%)	6(%)

Source: Field Study, 2025

The table 4.1 presents the findings on the Effectiveness of Green Militarization in Enhancing Uganda's National Security in the Mt. Elgon Region. Respondents expressed varying levels of agreement (SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, NS = Not Sure) on key parameters related to the impact of Green Militarization.

Green Militarization strategies promote collaboration between security forces and local communities for ecological conservation

From the findings, it's clear that Strongly Agree that is 67 (67%) and Agree that is 13(13%) combined suggest that 80(80%) of respondents believed Green Militarization fosters collaboration. However, 10% are unsure, and 10% (SD + D) disagree. The findings reflected the perception that Green Militarization promotes collaboration, aligning with studies like Muhumuza & Balkwill (2013), which highlighted the importance of community involvement in conservation efforts. However, challenges such as limited community participation or instances of enforcement-driven conflicts explained the dissenting views.

One key respondent noted that,

*"Community members are engaged in awareness programs by the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA), and this has fostered trust and cooperation."(*KI 1)

This response highlighted the positive role of Green Militarization strategies in engaging local communities through awareness campaigns. It suggested that the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) recognized the importance of community participation in ecological conservation. Awareness programs likely include education on the importance of biodiversity, sustainable resource use, and the legal frameworks governing conservation. The result is an improvement in trust and cooperation, as community members feel included in the conservation agenda.

While the response emphasized the benefits of awareness programs, it did not address potential challenges, such as limited reach in terms of awareness campaigns which did not cover all affected communities, leaving some feeling excluded. In some cases, awareness programs were one-off events rather than sustained efforts, reducing their long-term effectiveness. The response did not consider that trust and cooperation were contingent upon addressing power imbalances between security forces and communities. For instance, if security forces retain absolute authority, the collaboration may not feel equal to community members.

Scholars like Duffy (2014) have argued that collaboration is most effective when community empowerment is central, not when it is secondary to Militarized enforcement.

Another one however reported that,

"Sometimes, security forces prioritize enforcement over collaboration, which creates a gap between them and the community."(KI 2)

This response highlighted a critical challenge in Green Militarization that is the tension between enforcement and collaboration. Prioritizing enforcement often leads to heavy-handed approaches, such as eviction of encroachers, arrests, or patrols that may alienate community members. This can strain relationships, as communities view security forces as hostile rather than allies in conservation. Such gaps undermined the potential for trust and long-term cooperation. While this critique was valid, it did not fully acknowledge the constraints under which security forces operate, such as limited Resources where Security forces often faced pressure to achieve rapid results in curbing illegal activities like poaching or deforestation, which explained the enforcement-heavy approach as well as legal Mandates, for forces like UWA and UPDF were tasked with law enforcement and did not have adequate training in community engagement or conflict resolution. This was in addition to community Resistance where some community members resisted collaboration, especially if they perceived conservation laws as a threat to their livelihoods (e.g., farming or grazing within protected areas). This response aligned with arguments from Büscher and Ramutsindela (2015), which critique Green Militarization for alienating local communities when enforcement dominates over participatory approaches.

The two responses reflect a common dichotomy in conservation discourse: inclusion vs. enforcement. While KI 1 sees Green Militarization as an opportunity for collaboration, KI 2 critiques the enforcement-centric approach that can undermine trust. These perspectives are not mutually exclusive; rather, they point to the need for integrated strategies that balance law enforcement with genuine community participation.

The contrast between the two responses underscored the complex realities of Green Militarization in Mt. Elgon. While it had the potential to enhance ecological sustainability, its effectiveness depended on finding a delicate balance between enforcement and community collaboration. Studies by Muhumuza & Balkwill (2013) and Duffy (2014) supported the idea that participatory approaches were crucial for sustainable conservation outcomes. However, enforcement remained a necessary tool, particularly in areas with high levels of illegal activities. Balancing these approaches is essential for fostering trust and achieving long-term success.

Green Militarization effectively balances conservation priorities with the needs of local communities.

From the findings, it can be seen that a combined 90% (56% SA + 34% A) believed there is a balance between conservation and community needs. Only 10(10%) expressed disagreement or uncertainty. This largely positive response suggested that respondents see Green Militarization as addressing ecological goals without entirely neglecting Uganda's National Security. It resonates with Duffy (2014), who argued that inclusive conservation practices enhance effectiveness. However, dissent indicated room for improvement, especially in ensuring equitable access to resources for affected communities

The two responses from key informants (KIs) reflected differing experiences of Green Militarization's ability to balance conservation priorities with the needs of local communities. The juxtaposition of these views highlighted both successes and shortcomings of current strategies in Mt. Elgon region, where ecological conservation and National Security intersected.

One key informant reported that,

"Conservation programs allow community access to sustainable resource use zones, like firewood collection."(KI 3)

This response emphasized the positive impact of Green Militarization in creating regulated zones for community access to resources. By designating "sustainable use zones," conservation programs acknowledge the dependency of local communities on natural resources and attempt to accommodate their needs without undermining conservation efforts. Allowing access to firewood collection, for example, reduces the likelihood of illegal logging or resource over-extraction in ecologically sensitive areas. This regulated approach aligned with community-based conservation models that promote shared responsibilities between authorities like the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) and local residents. This approach fostered community goodwill and reduces potential conflicts between security forces and locals. By enabling access, it strikes a balance between conservation enforcement and addressing the socioeconomic needs of marginalized groups. It also promotes environmental awareness among community members who directly interact with conservation strategies.

However, the researcher argues that the success of such programs depends on effective monitoring and enforcement. Without proper oversight, sustainable use zones risk being overused, undermining their ecological purpose. Additionally, community access is typically limited to less ecologically sensitive resources like firewood, which may not fully meet the community's broader needs, such as land for farming. While sustainable use zones represent progress, their limited scope may not address systemic challenges like poverty or land scarcity. Scholars like Brockington

& Wilkie (2015) caution against over-reliance on such measures, as they can perpetuate economic inequalities if benefits are not equitably distributed. Moreover, questions remain about how "sustainability" is defined and who determines the boundaries and usage rules, which can lead to disputes between UWA and community members.

Another informant had this to say:

"In some cases, we are prohibited from accessing our farmland, which affects our survival" (KI 4)

This response reflected a critical challenge of Green Militarization: restrictions on community access to essential livelihood resources, such as farmland. Conservation strategies often involve creating "no-go" zones, which can result in forced evictions, restricted grazing, and other limitations on land use. Such measures, while aimed at protecting ecologically sensitive areas, frequently overlooked the socioeconomic realities of local populations, many of whom rely on subsistence farming.

The implication of this is that prohibiting access to farmland helps reduce encroachment into protected areas, prevent deforestation, and allow ecosystems to recover. These efforts are critical in fragile regions like Mt. Elgon, where biodiversity loss is significant. Prohibitions often created resentment among local communities, who perceived such measures as prioritizing ecological concerns over human survival. This led to increased conflict between communities and security forces, illegal activities such as poaching or encroachment, and the displacement of vulnerable populations. It's thus clear that the exclusionary approach undermines long-term ecological goals by alienating local stakeholders, who are essential for sustainable

conservation. This aligns with findings from Duffy (2014), who argued that Militarized Environmental Conservation often marginalized communities by criminalizing traditional practices and livelihoods. While ecological sustainability is a legitimate goal, achieving it at the expense of National Security contradicts the principles of integrated conservation and development programs. This exclusionary approach also exacerbates existing inequalities, as wealthier individuals or groups may have better access to land outside conservation areas, while marginalized communities bear the brunt of restrictions.

The contrasting perspectives underscored the dual-edged nature of Green Militarization in Mt. Elgon. On one hand, conservation strategies like sustainable use zones aimed to balance ecological priorities with community needs, fostering collaboration and goodwill. On the other hand, restrictive policies often alienate local populations, undermining trust and cooperation.

The responses illustrated the complexity of balancing conservation priorities with the needs of local communities. While programs like sustainable use zones represent progress, the exclusionary aspects of Green Militarization create significant challenges. By adopting participatory and inclusive approaches, conservation authorities can better integrate National Security into their ecological goals, ensuring long-term success in regions like Mt. Elgon.

The enforcement of conservation laws by security personnel has not led to long-term ecological improvements in the Mt. Elgon region.

The study found out that a significant majority (66% SD + 4% D) disagreed with the statement, suggesting they believed enforcement had contributed to long-term

ecological gains and that only 13% agreed or are unsure. The disagreement reflected confidence in enforcement strategies' effectiveness. This aligned with Marijnen & Verweijen (2016), who argued that enforcement reduces illegal exploitation of natural resources. However, critics warn of over-reliance on enforcement without addressing systemic issues such as poverty and land disputes.

This was reflected in one response that,

"Anti-poaching patrols have restored wildlife populations, and forest regeneration is evident."(KI 5)

This response emphasized the effectiveness of enforcement-focused Green Militarization strategies in achieving measurable ecological improvements. Anti-poaching patrols led by entities like the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) and supported by the Uganda People's Defense Forces (UPDF), aim to protect endangered species and reduce illegal activities such as logging, poaching, and encroachment. Evidence of wildlife restoration and forest regeneration suggested that these efforts are succeeding in reversing some of the environmental degradation in the Mt. Elgon region.

Enforcement strategies provide immediate protection to ecologically sensitive areas. In Mt. Elgon, anti-poaching patrols have deterred illegal activities, creating space for forests to regenerate and wildlife populations to recover. By securing biodiversity, these efforts contributed to global conservation goals such as the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

The researcher notes that Enforcement without addressing underlying socioeconomic issues may result in only temporary ecological improvements. The dependence of

local communities on forest resources often drives illegal activities. Without addressing these drivers, gains in wildlife and forest regeneration risk being unsustainable. While the reported ecological improvements were significant, relying solely on enforcement exacerbated tensions between security forces and local communities. Studies by Duffy (2014) and Neumann (2004) critique Militarized Environmental Conservation as being prone to human rights violations and community displacement, which undermined long-term ecological goals. Sustainable conservation requires not just deterrence but also inclusive strategies that engage local populations as stakeholders in the ecosystem.

However, on the contrally, another key informant reported that

"Although there are improvements, enforcement alone cannot achieve long-term success without community-led conservation."(KI 6)

This response highlighted the limitations of enforcement-centric strategies and advocates for the inclusion of community-led conservation. While anti-poaching patrols have had short-term successes, long-term ecological sustainability depended on fostering local ownership of conservation efforts. Community involvement is vital for creating sustainable relationships between people and the environment, which can help reduce dependency on protected areas.

In essence, community-led conservation can complement enforcement by addressing root causes of ecological degradation, such as poverty and lack of alternative livelihoods. Collaborative approaches empower local communities to protect their environment while meeting their socioeconomic needs. Participatory strategies also reduce the potential for conflict between conservation authorities and communities.

Though Implementing community-led conservation requires significant investment in capacity building, education, and alternative livelihood programs. This approach may take longer to produce tangible results compared to enforcement-based strategies, potentially leading to ecological degradation in the interim. The emphasis on community-led conservation is consistent with studies by Adams and Hutton (2007), who argue that participatory approaches are more sustainable than coercive methods. However, critics like Brockington and Wilkie (2015) caution that participatory models are not a panacea, as power dynamics and unequal resource distribution within communities can hinder effective implementation. A hybrid model that combines enforcement with meaningful community engagement may be the most effective strategy.

The findings demonstrated that while enforcement strategies have achieved notable ecological gains in the Mt. Elgon region, they are insufficient for ensuring sustainable outcomes. A shift towards community-led conservation, complemented by enforcement, is thus essential for balancing ecological priorities with the needs of local populations. Combining the strengths of both approaches can reduce conflicts and promote both human and environmental security.

The involvement of security forces (UWA and UPDF) in conservation efforts has improved the overall ecological health of Mt. Elgon National Park

The study found out that a significant 82% (69% SA + 13% A) affirmed that security involvement has positively impacted ecological health and that only 18% (8% SD + 10% D) disagreed. The majority believed security forces have positively impacted Mt. Elgon's ecosystem, a view supported by Western et al. (2020), who emphasized the role of enforcement in reducing illegal activities. However, dissent highlighted issues

like inadequate training and occasional misuse of authority, which undermines the gains.

One UWA official reported that:

"The presence of UWA and UPDF patrols has curbed illegal logging and encroachment." (KI 7)

Another community member who had stayed in the area long enough had this to say:

"While ecological health has improved, some UPDF personnel lack the training needed to handle conservation."

The two responses reflected complementary but contrasting perspectives on the role of Green Militarization in balancing conservation priorities with the needs of local communities in the Mt. Elgon region. Both responses acknowledged the ecological benefits of security-led interventions while pointing out operational gaps, particularly regarding capacity and training.

This first respondent/statement highlighted the positive impact of Green Militarization in reducing harmful activities such as illegal logging and encroachment. Security forces like the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) and the Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF) conduct regular patrols, monitor protected areas, and enforce conservation laws. These activities help prevent unsanctioned exploitation of forest resources and safeguard biodiversity.

The reduction in illegal activities is critical for the preservation of fragile ecosystems like Mt. Elgon National Park, which serves as a vital water catchment area and habitat for diverse flora and fauna. Evidence of reduced encroachment supports global

biodiversity conservation goals, such as those outlined by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 15: Life on Land).

It should be clear however that while enforcement is effective in curbing illegal activities, it often fails to address the underlying socioeconomic pressures driving such activities, such as poverty, unemployment, and limited access to resources. Over-reliance on enforcement strains relationships between security forces and local communities, increasing the risk of resistance or non-compliance.

The success of enforcement in curbing illegal logging aligns with findings by Duffy (2014), who highlighted the immediate effectiveness of Militarized Environmental Conservation in protecting biodiversity. However, scholars like Neumann (2004) argued that enforcement-focused approaches often fail to achieve sustainability without community support. If enforcement does not involve local communities in decision-making or provide alternative livelihoods, it risks creating long-term ecological and social challenges.

For the second response:

While ecological health has improved, some UPDF personnel lack the training needed to handle conservation."(KI 8)

This perspective raised concerns about the operational readiness of security forces involved in Green Militarization. This means that conservation requires specialized knowledge in ecology, sustainable resource management, and community engagement, which traditional security training often does not provide. Poorly trained personnel always struggle to balance enforcement with fostering trust and collaboration with local communities. This response pointed to a critical gap in the implementation of

Green Militarization strategies that is the need for tailored training programs that equip security personnel with the skills to handle complex conservation issues. It underscored the importance of a multidisciplinary approach, where conservation knowledge is integrated with enforcement capabilities.

However the weaknesses is that inadequately trained personnel can unintentionally escalate conflicts with local communities, reducing the effectiveness of conservation efforts. The lack of training also limits the ability of security forces to implement sustainable practices, leading to a reliance on punitive measures rather than preventive or collaborative strategies. This aligns with findings by Brockington and Wilkie (2015), who emphasize that conservation efforts involving security personnel must include robust training in ecological science and community relations. Without this, Green Militarization risks becoming counterproductive, as poorly executed interventions can alienate communities and undermine conservation goals.

The responses revealed that Green Militarization has had measurable success in curbing illegal activities and improving ecological health in Mt. Elgon. However, the lack of adequate training among security personnel highlights a critical limitation. Addressing these gaps through capacity building and community engagement enhances the effectiveness of Green Militarization, ensuring a balance between conservation priorities and the needs of local populations

The findings also revealed that Green Militarization has significantly increased illegal activities such as deforestation and poaching in the Mt. Elgon region

The study found out that a strong majority (68% SD + 12% D) disagree, suggesting that Green Militarization has not increased illegal activities and that only 14% agree

or are unsure. These findings affirmed that Green Militarization has reduced illegal exploitation, aligning with studies that link enforcement with reduced deforestation and poaching (Büscher & Ramutsindela, 2015). However, critics argue that militarization may lead to displacement rather than elimination of illegal activities, calling for integrated strategies.

This is reflected in a response from a key informant (UWA) that

"Illegal activities have reduced due to constant patrols and strict enforcement measures."(KI 9)

This response emphasized the immediate benefits of Green Militarization in curbing harmful activities like illegal logging, poaching, and encroachment. By maintaining a strong security presence through patrols and enforcement, the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) can ensure greater compliance with conservation regulations in the Mt. Elgon region.

This implies that strict enforcement serves as a deterrent to illegal activities, protecting fragile ecosystems and biodiversity in Mt. Elgon. The visible presence of security forces demonstrates the state's commitment to conservation, which can increase awareness and compliance among local communities. Reduced illegal activities can create opportunities for forest regeneration and wildlife population recovery, enhancing the region's ecological health.

Despite this, it's clear that enforcement-focused approaches often overlook the socioeconomic drivers of illegal activities, such as poverty, unemployment, and land scarcity. Heavy reliance on enforcement without alternative livelihood strategies for affected communities fosters resentment and lead to non-cooperation. The success of

strict enforcement aligns with global trends in Militarized conservation, as noted by Duffy et al. (2019), who argue that robust security measures are effective in achieving short-term ecological goals. However, enforcement alone is insufficient for long-term success, as highlighted by Neumann (2004). Conservation strategies must incorporate community engagement and socioeconomic interventions to address the root causes of environmental degradation. Without such measures, reduced illegal activities may only be temporary.

A member of UPDF noted that

"Sometimes, heavy enforcement displaces illegal activities to less monitored areas."(KI 10)

This response points to a common unintended consequence of Militarized conservation: the spatial displacement of illegal activities. While constant patrols and strict enforcement reduce infractions in one area, they also inadvertently push these activities into less protected regions, where monitoring and enforcement are weaker.

This observation highlighted the need for holistic conservation strategies that go beyond enforcement in targeted areas to include broader surveillance and community-driven initiatives. It underscores the limitations of security-focused approaches, prompting discussions about the importance of addressing the root causes of illegal activities. The two responses highlighted the dual nature of Green Militarization's impact on conservation and community needs. While strict enforcement and patrols are effective in reducing illegal activities in targeted areas, they also risk displacing such activities to less monitored regions, potentially undermining the broader goals of conservation and security.

However, displacement of illegal activities undermines the broader objectives of conservation by shifting environmental degradation to less monitored regions. The reliance on enforcement without addressing underlying drivers may lead to a "cat-and-mouse" dynamic, where perpetrators adapt to avoid detection rather than cease their activities altogether. This perspective is supported by scholarly critiques of Militarized conservation, such as Lunstrum (2014), who argues that enforcement often leads to the geographical redistribution of environmental harm rather than its elimination. Addressing this issue requires integrated conservation strategies that combine enforcement with education, community involvement, and sustainable resource management. For instance, a community-based monitoring program helps reduce illegal activities across a wider geographic area by leveraging local knowledge and participation.

The responses illustrated that while Green Militarization has been effective in curbing illegal activities in targeted areas, its limitations highlight the need for a more comprehensive approach. By addressing the displacement of illegal activities and involving local communities in conservation, Green Militarization can achieve a more balanced and sustainable impact on both ecological conservation and National Security in the Mt. Elgon region. The research thus highlights that the findings suggest that Green Militarization has positively contributed to ecological sustainability in the Mt. Elgon region. Collaboration, enforcement, and security involvement are perceived as effective, though challenges such as community dissatisfaction and occasional lapses in strategy persist.

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