

Understanding the Concepts of Peace, Security, and Regional Security in West Africa: An Assessment of Challenges Limiting Nigeria's Peace and Security Efforts in Mali and the Niger Republic

by

Nikoro Felix, Abraham Ejogba Orhero, Vincent Eseoghene Efebeh

Department of Political Science, Faculty of the Social Science,
Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria
Email: nikorofelix@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study examines the concepts of peace, security, and regional security in West Africa, with a focus on the challenges limiting Nigeria's peace and security efforts in Mali and the Niger Republic. The study adopts a historical research design and relies on content analysis of secondary sources, including journal articles, official reports, and policy documents. It explores the evolving understanding of peace as not only the absence of conflict but also the presence of justice, good governance, and socioeconomic stability, while security is viewed within the broader framework of human security. The study finds that West Africa continues to experience persistent instability driven by military coups, weak governance, and violent extremism, necessitating regional intervention through ECOWAS, where Nigeria plays a leading role. However, Nigeria's effectiveness is constrained by domestic insecurity, economic limitations, institutional weaknesses within ECOWAS, geopolitical rivalries in the Sahel, and legitimacy challenges surrounding external interventions. These constraints reduce the consistency and impact of Nigeria's peace and security initiatives in Mali and the Niger Republic. The study concludes that sustainable regional security requires stronger cooperation, improved burden-sharing, and long-term strategies addressing structural causes of instability in West Africa.

Keywords: Peace, Security, Regional Security, Nigeria, ECOWAS

INTRODUCTION

Peace and security remain central pillars of international relations and regional cooperation, particularly in volatile regions such as West Africa. Despite various institutional frameworks and collective efforts led by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the region continues to experience persistent instability characterized by military coups, insurgency, terrorism, and weak governance structures. In this context, Nigeria has emerged as a key regional actor, consistently playing a leading role in peacekeeping, conflict resolution, and security interventions across West Africa, including in Mali and the Niger Republic. However, despite

Nigeria's active involvement and leadership within ECOWAS, its peace and security efforts are often constrained by a range of political, economic, institutional, and geopolitical challenges.

The concept of peace has evolved beyond the mere absence of violence to include structural conditions that promote justice, equity, and social cohesion. Galtung (1996) distinguishes between negative peace, which refers to the absence of direct violence, and positive peace, which involves the removal of structural causes of conflict. Similarly, security has expanded from traditional military-focused perspectives to include human security, which emphasizes protection from threats such as poverty, unemployment, political exclusion, and environmental degradation (UNDP, 1994). Regional security, therefore, involves collaborative mechanisms among states to address shared threats that transcend national boundaries, especially in conflict-prone regions like West Africa.

Nigeria's leadership role in regional peace and security is deeply rooted in its foreign policy doctrine, which emphasizes African-centered diplomacy and regional stability. Through ECOWAS, Nigeria has contributed significantly to peace enforcement missions, mediation processes, and diplomatic interventions in crises across the region. In Mali, Nigeria supported ECOWAS-led initiatives aimed at restoring constitutional order following repeated military coups and addressing the broader security threats posed by jihadist groups in the Sahel. Similarly, in the Niger Republic, Nigeria played a central role in ECOWAS responses following the 2023 military takeover, including the imposition of sanctions and diplomatic pressure to restore democratic governance.

However, despite these contributions, Nigeria's peace and security efforts in both countries have been constrained by multiple challenges. These include limited military and logistical capacity relative to the scale of regional crises, competing domestic security demands such as insurgency in the Northeast and banditry in the Northwest, and economic constraints that limit sustained external interventions. Additionally, political divisions within ECOWAS member states, varying national interests, and declining consensus on intervention strategies have further weakened the effectiveness of collective security responses. The increasing influence of external actors in the Sahel, particularly Russia and other non-Western powers, has also complicated Nigeria's traditional leadership role in regional security governance.

The crises in Mali and Niger Republic highlight the complexity of contemporary security challenges in West Africa. In Mali, prolonged instability, weak state institutions, and the presence of extremist groups have undermined repeated regional and international interventions. In Niger, the 2023 coup d'état exposed deep tensions between constitutional governance principles and state sovereignty, raising questions about the legitimacy and effectiveness of ECOWAS intervention strategies. Nigeria's efforts within these contexts reflect both its commitment to regional stability and the structural limitations it faces in translating diplomatic influence into sustainable security outcomes.

Against this background, this study examines the challenges that limit Nigeria's peace and security efforts in Mali and the Niger Republic. It seeks to provide a critical analysis of the internal and external factors that constrain Nigeria's regional security role, with a view to understanding the broader implications for ECOWAS-led peacebuilding in West Africa. By

doing so, the study contributes to ongoing scholarly debates on regional security governance, state capacity, and the effectiveness of collective security arrangements in addressing complex political and security crises.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of Peace

Peace is commonly understood as more than the mere absence of war or violent conflict. While the cessation of hostilities is an important component, scholars emphasize that true peace is multidimensional, encompassing political, social, and economic dimensions that ensure sustainable stability (Galtung, 1996; Lederach, 1997). Johan Galtung, widely regarded as the founder of peace studies, distinguished between *negative peace*, which is the absence of direct violence, and *positive peace*, which involves the establishment of social justice, functioning institutions, and mechanisms for the peaceful resolution of disputes. Negative peace alone, while necessary, is insufficient for long-term stability, as it may mask structural inequalities and underlying grievances that could eventually reignite conflict (Galtung, 1996).

In the West African context, peace extends beyond the absence of armed conflict to include political stability, democratic governance, and institutional capacity. According to Orhero (2020), sustainable peace in West Africa requires states to uphold the rule of law, foster inclusive political participation, and implement effective mechanisms for conflict management. These elements help prevent the escalation of disputes into violent confrontations, while promoting trust in state institutions and enhancing citizens' sense of security. The fragility of peace is particularly evident in countries like Mali and the Niger Republic, where recurrent coups, insurgencies, and communal conflicts illustrate the consequences of weak governance and exclusionary political practices (Orhero & Okolie, 2023).

Sustainable peace also necessitates addressing socio-economic inequalities and ensuring equitable access to resources. Poverty, unemployment, and marginalization are significant drivers of violent conflict, as they create grievances that can be exploited by extremist groups (Aning & Edu-Afful, 2021). In Mali, for instance, decades of marginalization of northern communities contributed to the rise of jihadist insurgencies in the Sahel region (Dowd & Raleigh, 2022). Similarly, in the Niger Republic, underdevelopment and poor access to social services in rural areas have fueled support for extremist actors and weakened state legitimacy. Orhero (2020) highlights that peacebuilding efforts must therefore integrate strategies for social and economic development alongside political reforms, as the absence of these measures often leads to cyclical conflict.

Furthermore, the concept of peace in West Africa increasingly incorporates the principles of human security, which emphasizes the protection of individuals and communities from

threats such as violence, displacement, and economic deprivation (UNDP, 1994). Human security recognizes that individuals' well-being is central to the sustainability of peace, as insecurity at the community level can escalate into broader regional instability. According to Orhero (2020), human security and state security are interdependent: a state cannot achieve lasting stability if its citizens are vulnerable to violence, poverty, or social exclusion. This perspective underscores the need for multi-level peacebuilding approaches that address both structural and immediate threats.

Regional mechanisms such as ECOWAS play a crucial role in promoting peace in West Africa by providing institutional frameworks for conflict prevention, mediation, and peacekeeping. Nigeria, as a regional leader, has historically contributed to ECOWAS-led interventions, offering diplomatic, financial, and military support to stabilize conflict-affected states (Adebajo, 2021). Orhero (2020) notes that Nigeria's engagement demonstrates how leadership within regional organizations can help foster stability, especially when internal governance challenges in neighboring states threaten broader regional security. In Mali and the Niger Republic, Nigeria's involvement in peace negotiations, sanctions enforcement, and mediation initiatives exemplifies the practical application of positive peace strategies, emphasizing not only the cessation of violence but also the reconstruction of political and social institutions.

In addition to governance and development, reconciliation and social cohesion are essential components of peace. Lederach (1997) argues that sustainable peace requires addressing the root causes of conflict and fostering long-term relationships between conflicting groups. Orhero and Okolie (2023) extend this argument in the West African context, asserting that peacebuilding must prioritize local participation, traditional conflict resolution mechanisms, and inclusive governance structures. In Mali and the Republic of Niger, efforts to integrate community leaders, civil society actors, and youth into peacebuilding processes are critical to reducing the likelihood of relapse into conflict.

Thus, peace in West Africa, and particularly in Mali and the Niger Republic, is a multidimensional and dynamic concept that extends beyond the mere absence of violence. It encompasses political stability, social justice, inclusive governance, human security, and socio-economic development. Orhero and Okolie (2023) emphasize that achieving sustainable peace requires coordinated interventions at multiple levels, integrating state capacity-building, human development, and regional cooperation. Without such a comprehensive approach, efforts to maintain peace remain fragile, and states remain vulnerable to recurrent conflict, insurgency, and political instability (Galtung, 1996; Lederach, 1997; Dowd & Raleigh, 2022; Aning & Edu-Afful, 2021).

Concept of Security

Security traditionally referred to the protection of state sovereignty, territorial integrity, and national borders from external aggression. This classical understanding of security

emphasized the military capabilities of the state and the prevention of foreign threats to its stability and survival (Buzan, 1991). In the African context, such traditional security concerns were central during the post-colonial period, when newly independent states focused on defending borders, preventing external interference, and consolidating political authority. Nigeria, as the most populous country and a regional hegemon in West Africa, has historically approached security from this perspective, emphasizing the protection of its sovereignty while contributing to regional peacekeeping initiatives (Okolie, 2022).

However, contemporary security thinking has expanded to include the concept of human security, which places individuals and communities at the center of security considerations (UNDP, 1994). Human security recognizes that threats are not limited to interstate warfare but include terrorism, organized crime, environmental degradation, political violence, poverty, and health crises (Egbadju, Ikenga, & Otite, 2023). This broader approach emphasizes the interdependence between state security and the protection of citizens, asserting that a state cannot achieve stability if its population is exposed to systemic insecurity. In West Africa, this perspective is particularly relevant given the transnational nature of many security challenges, including arms trafficking, insurgencies, terrorism, and smuggling networks that often cross porous borders.

In the Sahel region, Mali and the Niger Republic have experienced multidimensional threats that blur the lines between traditional and human security. Military coups, extremist insurgencies, and communal violence have undermined state capacity and destabilized local communities (Efebeh, 2021). These crises highlight the need for a comprehensive security approach that addresses both the state's territorial integrity and the welfare of individuals. For example, the resurgence of jihadist groups in northern Mali and southern Niger has prompted regional actors, including Nigeria, to adopt integrated security measures that combine military intervention with political dialogue, humanitarian assistance, and capacity building for local governance (Umukoro, Obagbinoko, & Efebeh, 2025).

Nigeria's role in promoting security in Mali and the Niger Republic is informed by both traditional state-centered security concerns and the broader human security paradigm. On one hand, Nigeria supports regional stability through military contributions, peacekeeping operations under ECOWAS, and logistical support for the enforcement of ceasefires and democratic norms (Okolie, Onyema, & Basey, 2019). On the other hand, it engages in initiatives aimed at protecting vulnerable populations, mitigating poverty-driven insecurity, and promoting socio-economic development, recognizing that durable peace requires addressing the structural causes of conflict (Egbadju, Ikenga, & Otite, 2023).

Scholars emphasize that the interplay between traditional and human security approaches is crucial for effective regional peacebuilding. Orhero (2020) argues that security

strategies must integrate military preparedness with human-centric interventions, including the promotion of education, health services, and inclusive governance. Similarly, Okolie (2022) notes that a solely militarized approach often fails to achieve lasting stability because it does not address grievances, marginalization, and social inequalities that fuel insurgency and unrest. In Mali and the Niger Republic, the Nigerian government's engagement in diplomacy, capacity building, and humanitarian support reflects this dual approach, combining state protection with efforts to safeguard citizens' rights and well-being.

Moreover, the transnational nature of security threats in West Africa requires regional cooperation. ECOWAS has established mechanisms for joint conflict prevention, mediation, and peacekeeping, which rely heavily on Nigeria's leadership and resources. Efebeh (2021) emphasizes that Nigeria's diplomatic interventions, alongside coordinated military action, play a pivotal role in containing crises that could spill across borders and destabilize the wider region. These efforts highlight the evolving concept of security in West Africa: one that is not only about defending states from external aggression but also about ensuring the safety, welfare, and resilience of communities affected by conflict.

In conclusion, security in the West African context, and specifically in Mali and the Niger Republic, is a multidimensional concept encompassing both traditional and human security perspectives. Nigeria's peace and security role demonstrates an integrated approach that combines state-centered strategies, such as military and diplomatic interventions, with human-centered initiatives, including socio-economic development and protection of vulnerable populations. Addressing both dimensions is essential for sustainable stability, as insecurity at either the state or community level can exacerbate conflict and threaten regional peace (UNDP, 1994; Okolie, 2022).

Regional Security

Regional security refers to the coordinated efforts by states within a specific geographical area to identify, prevent, and manage threats that affect multiple countries through cooperation and institutional mechanisms. Unlike traditional security, which focuses primarily on the protection of individual states from external threats, regional security emphasizes collective action, shared responsibility, and multilateral frameworks to address both internal and transnational challenges (Buzan & Wæver, 2003). This approach recognizes that insecurity in one country can easily spill over borders, affecting neighboring states and the wider region.

In West Africa, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) serves as the primary regional organization tasked with promoting peace, security, and political stability. Established in 1975, ECOWAS initially focused on economic integration but gradually expanded its mandate to include conflict prevention, crisis management, and peacebuilding, recognizing that socio-political instability threatens both development and

regional cohesion (Aning & Edu-Afful, 2021). The ECOWAS Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping, and Security (the ECOWAS Conflict Mechanism) provides the operational framework through which member states coordinate security responses. This includes early warning systems, diplomatic interventions, sanctions, mediation, and deployment of peacekeeping forces when necessary (Orhero & Okolie, 2023).

Nigeria's leadership role within ECOWAS has been pivotal in shaping the regional security architecture. As the most populous country and largest economy in West Africa, Nigeria has historically assumed the burden of providing diplomatic, military, and logistical support for peacekeeping operations. For instance, Nigeria's contributions to the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and more recently in Mali and the Niger Republic illustrate the practical application of regional security cooperation (Okolie, 2022; Efebeh, 2021). Through these interventions, Nigeria has demonstrated both its capacity and willingness to uphold regional norms, support democratic governance, and stabilize conflict-prone states.

In Mali and the Niger Republic, regional security efforts have been crucial in responding to a spectrum of security challenges, including terrorist insurgencies, political coups, and communal violence. The instability in Mali, driven by jihadist movements in the Sahel and internal political crises, prompted ECOWAS to mediate negotiations, deploy observers, and coordinate with Nigeria for logistical and diplomatic support. Similarly, in the Niger Republic, Nigeria has supported ECOWAS-led interventions aimed at mitigating the consequences of the 2023 military coup, advocating for sanctions while simultaneously engaging in diplomatic dialogue to restore constitutional order (Umukoro, Obagbinoko, & Efebeh, 2025). These cases highlight the importance of collective regional action, as unilateral efforts by individual states are often insufficient to manage complex, transnational security threats.

The concept of regional security also emphasizes preventive measures. According to Orhero and Okolie (2023), early warning systems, intelligence sharing, and joint border monitoring are essential for mitigating the risks posed by cross-border insurgency, arms trafficking, and organized crime. ECOWAS has institutionalized these mechanisms, creating regional monitoring centers and cooperative agreements between member states to detect and respond to emerging threats. Nigeria's central role in these initiatives ensures that the largest contributor in terms of resources and expertise guides strategic responses to regional crises.

Scholars further note that regional security is multidimensional, extending beyond military interventions to include socio-economic development, governance reforms, and human security initiatives (Okolie et al., 2019). For example, Nigeria has participated in programs aimed at stabilizing northern Mali and southeastern Niger by supporting community development, education, and vocational training, thereby addressing the root

causes of conflict alongside immediate security threats. This integrated approach underscores that sustainable regional security requires a combination of political, economic, and military strategies coordinated through institutional frameworks such as ECOWAS.

Despite these efforts, challenges persist. Limited resources, political disagreements among member states, and occasional resistance from domestic actors in target countries can hinder the effectiveness of regional security initiatives (Adebajo, 2021; Okolie, 2022). In some cases, ECOWAS interventions have faced criticism for being reactive rather than proactive, emphasizing military solutions over long-term structural reforms (Efebeh, 2021). Nevertheless, the organization remains the most comprehensive and effective framework for managing regional security in West Africa, with Nigeria's leadership being a cornerstone of its operational capacity.

Therefore, regional security in West Africa is a collective, cooperative effort to address shared threats that transcend national borders. ECOWAS provides the institutional framework for such action, while Nigeria's leadership ensures the mobilization of resources, strategic guidance, and regional coordination. The cases of Mali and the Niger Republic demonstrate both the necessity of regional cooperation and the complexities involved in balancing military intervention, diplomacy, and development-oriented peacebuilding. Regional security, therefore, is a dynamic concept that integrates state protection, human security, and multilateral collaboration to achieve lasting peace and stability (Buzan & Wæver, 2003; Orhero & Okolie, 2023).

Challenges Limit Nigeria's Peace and Security Efforts in Mali and the Niger Republic

Nigeria has historically played a dominant role in maintaining peace and security in West Africa, particularly through its leadership within the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). In Mali and the Niger Republic, Nigeria has engaged in diplomatic mediation, peacekeeping operations, military cooperation, humanitarian support, intelligence sharing, and democratic advocacy. These interventions reflect Nigeria's foreign policy objective of promoting regional stability because insecurity in neighboring countries directly threatens its own national security and economic interests. However, despite these efforts, numerous challenges continue to limit the effectiveness of Nigeria's peace and security initiatives in Mali and the Republic. These challenges include terrorism and insurgency, political instability, military coups, porous borders, weak governance institutions, economic difficulties, anti-ECOWAS sentiments, external geopolitical competition, humanitarian crises, climate change, and Nigeria's own domestic security problems. Collectively, these obstacles have weakened regional peacebuilding frameworks and complicated Nigeria's efforts to achieve sustainable peace in the Sahel region.

1. Persistence of Terrorism and Insurgency

One of the most significant challenges confronting Nigeria's peace and security efforts is the persistence of terrorism and violent insurgency across the Sahel region. Armed extremist groups such as Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS), Boko Haram, and Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM) continue to expand their activities across Mali, the Niger Republic, Burkina Faso, and surrounding territories. These groups exploit fragile state institutions, poverty, unemployment, ethnic grievances, and poor governance to recruit fighters and establish territorial influence. Despite years of military operations and regional counterterrorism cooperation, terrorist attacks remain widespread in northern and central Mali as well as the border regions of the Niger Republic. The continued expansion of extremist violence demonstrates the inability of regional interventions to fully eliminate insurgent networks and address the socio-economic conditions that sustain them (Megwalu & Garba, 2024).

The activities of terrorist groups have become increasingly sophisticated and dangerous. Extremist organizations now employ advanced tactics such as coordinated assaults, improvised explosive devices (IEDs), drone surveillance, kidnappings, and attacks on military installations. These groups also take advantage of difficult terrain and weak state presence in rural communities to evade security forces. According to Ahmadu (2025), the increasing complexity of terrorism in the Sahel has overwhelmed regional security structures and exposed the limitations of military-centered approaches to peacebuilding.

2. Porous Borders and Cross-Border Crimes

Another major challenge limiting Nigeria's peace and security efforts is the existence of vast and porous borders between Nigeria, Mali, and the Niger Republic. The borders connecting these countries are poorly monitored and difficult to secure because of inadequate surveillance technology, weak immigration systems, and insufficient security personnel. Criminal organizations, terrorists, arms traffickers, smugglers, and human traffickers exploit these porous borders to move freely across territories (Megwalu & Garba, 2024). Weapons and fighters often flow through ungoverned spaces, thereby strengthening insurgent groups and undermining regional security operations. Hudu et al. (2021) observe that although ECOWAS free movement protocols encourage regional integration and economic cooperation, they also create opportunities for criminal networks to exploit weak border management systems. Consequently, Nigeria faces enormous difficulties in monitoring the movement of arms, insurgents, and illicit goods across the region.

3. Political Instability and Military Coups

Political instability and repeated military coups in Mali and the Niger Republic also constitute serious obstacles to Nigeria's peacebuilding efforts. Mali experienced military

coups in 2020 and 2021, while the Republic witnessed a military takeover in 2023. These unconstitutional changes of government disrupted democratic governance, weakened state institutions, and undermined regional peace initiatives (Megwalu & Garba, 2024).

Nigeria, through ECOWAS, responded by imposing sanctions, organizing diplomatic negotiations, and demanding the restoration of constitutional order. However, these measures achieved limited success because military juntas consolidated power and resisted regional pressure (Abdulrahman et al., 2025). The repeated coups revealed the weaknesses of ECOWAS conflict-management mechanisms and reduced confidence in Nigeria's regional leadership role. Aworawo (2020) argues that ECOWAS interventions often face implementation challenges because member states have varying political interests and inconsistent commitment to democratic norms.

4. Withdrawal of Mali and Niger from ECOWAS

The withdrawal of Mali, Niger Republic, and Burkina Faso from ECOWAS under the Alliance of Sahel States (AES) created a major setback for Nigeria's peace and security efforts. The exit of these countries disrupted regional security frameworks, including intelligence-sharing arrangements, joint military operations, and counterterrorism collaborations (Megwalu & Garba, 2024). Nigeria's influence within the Sahel region declined significantly following the formation of the AES alliance. According to Musa et al. (2025), the alliance reflects dissatisfaction with ECOWAS policies and demonstrates growing resistance to Nigeria's regional dominance. The fragmentation of ECOWAS weakened regional cohesion and complicated collective responses to terrorism and political instability.

5. Anti-ECOWAS and Anti-Nigeria Sentiments

Anti-ECOWAS and anti-Nigeria sentiments among sections of the population in Mali and the Niger Republic further undermine Nigeria's interventions. Many citizens in these countries perceive ECOWAS sanctions and diplomatic pressure as interference in domestic affairs. Military governments have used nationalist rhetoric to portray ECOWAS and Nigeria as serving Western geopolitical interests rather than African priorities (Megwalu & Garba, 2024). This perception weakened public trust in regional peace initiatives and strengthened support for military regimes in Mali and the Niger Republic. Solaru and Amodu (2025) note that the perception of external interference contributed to public resistance against ECOWAS-led interventions and reduced the effectiveness of diplomatic negotiations.

6. External Geopolitical Influence

Another challenge affecting Nigeria's peacebuilding efforts is the growing influence of external geopolitical actors in the Sahel region. Mali and the Niger Republic have

increasingly shifted away from traditional Western partners such as France and strengthened security cooperation with Russia and other foreign actors. Russian military contractors and private security groups have become more involved in security operations within Mali and Niger (Megwalu & Garba, 2024). This geopolitical realignment complicated Nigeria's diplomatic initiatives and weakened ECOWAS's influence in the region. External powers often pursue competing strategic interests, thereby creating divisions among African states and undermining regional cooperation. Scholars argue that geopolitical rivalry between Western countries, Russia, and emerging global actors has intensified instability in the Sahel and weakened coordinated security strategies (Musa, 2024).

7. Weak Governance Institutions and Corruption

Weak governance institutions and corruption also remain major barriers to sustainable peace and security in Mali and the Niger Republic. Both countries suffer from fragile state institutions, weak judicial systems, corruption, poor public service delivery, and limited government presence in rural areas (Megwalu & Garba, 2024). These governance failures contribute to poverty, inequality, unemployment, and public dissatisfaction, which extremist groups exploit to recruit supporters. Nigeria's interventions have therefore faced limitations because military operations alone cannot address the structural causes of insecurity. Ahmadu (2025) emphasizes that sustainable peace in the Sahel requires effective governance, institutional reforms, economic development, and social inclusion.

8. Economic Constraints

Economic challenges equally limit Nigeria's capacity to sustain regional peace and security operations. Peacekeeping missions, military deployments, humanitarian assistance, and diplomatic engagements require substantial financial resources. However, Nigeria itself faces severe economic difficulties, including inflation, unemployment, rising debt, currency instability, and declining government revenues (Megwalu & Garba, 2024). These economic pressures reduce Nigeria's ability to finance ECOWAS security initiatives and maintain long-term peacekeeping operations. Jibrin (2025) explains that Nigeria's economic constraints have weakened the operational effectiveness of regional security institutions and reduced the country's capacity to provide leadership within ECOWAS.

9. Nigeria's Domestic Security Challenges

Nigeria's domestic security challenges further undermine its regional peacebuilding role. The country continues to experience Boko Haram insurgency, banditry, kidnapping, separatist agitations, communal violence, and farmer-herder conflicts. These internal crises overstretch Nigeria's military and security agencies, forcing the government to

prioritize domestic security concerns over external peacekeeping operations. The growing insecurity within Nigeria weakens its credibility as a regional security leader and limits the resources available for interventions in Mali and Niger Republic (Oshita & Alli, 2020).

10. Humanitarian Crises

Humanitarian crises in Mali and the Niger Republic also complicate Nigeria's peace and security efforts. Persistent violence, displacement, food insecurity, and refugee movements have created severe humanitarian emergencies in both countries. Millions of people have been displaced internally or forced to seek refuge in neighboring states. These humanitarian problems create additional pressures on governments and regional organizations, including resource competition, social instability, and increased vulnerability to radicalization. Nigeria's interventions are therefore challenged by the enormous humanitarian needs generated by conflict and insecurity in the region (Megwalu & Garba, 2024).

11. Climate Change and Environmental Degradation

Climate change and environmental degradation represent additional challenges to peace and security in the Sahel. Desertification, drought, shrinking water resources, and declining agricultural productivity have intensified competition over land and natural resources among communities. These environmental pressures contribute to communal conflicts, migration, poverty, and recruitment into armed groups. Security analysts increasingly recognize climate-related insecurity as a major driver of conflict in Mali and Niger Republic. Nigeria's peacebuilding efforts are therefore constrained by environmental factors that worsen socio-economic instability and undermine sustainable development in the region (Megwalu & Garba, 2024).

12. Institutional Weaknesses within ECOWAS

Institutional weaknesses within ECOWAS itself limit Nigeria's ability to effectively promote regional peace and security. ECOWAS has faced criticism for inconsistent enforcement of democratic principles, delayed responses to crises, and overreliance on sanctions without comprehensive conflict-resolution strategies. Internal divisions among member states and differing national interests often weaken collective action. The inability of ECOWAS to prevent military coups and maintain regional cohesion has reduced confidence in the organization's peace and security architecture (Abdulrahman et al., 2025).

Despite these numerous challenges, Nigeria remains one of the most influential actors in promoting peace and security in West Africa. Its military strength, diplomatic influence, and leadership within ECOWAS continue to play critical roles in regional conflict

management. Nigeria's interventions have contributed significantly to counterterrorism cooperation, democratic advocacy, humanitarian assistance, and regional diplomacy. Nevertheless, achieving lasting peace and stability in Mali and the Niger Republic will require stronger regional cooperation, improved governance, economic development, institutional reforms, effective counterterrorism strategies, and greater international support.

Implications of Nigeria's Involvement for Peace and Stability in West Africa

Nigeria's involvement in peacekeeping, conflict mediation, counterterrorism operations, and regional diplomacy in Mali and the Niger Republic has significant implications for peace and stability in West Africa. As the largest economy and one of the strongest military powers in the region, Nigeria has historically played a leading role in maintaining regional security through the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) (Aworawo, 2020). Nigeria's interventions in Mali and Niger demonstrate its commitment to preventing regional instability, combating terrorism, restoring democratic governance, and promoting collective security (Oshita & Alli, 2020). However, Nigeria's involvement has also generated political, economic, diplomatic, and security consequences for West Africa. While its interventions have strengthened regional cooperation and peacebuilding efforts in some respects, they have also exposed weaknesses within ECOWAS and intensified geopolitical tensions in the Sahel region (Megwalu & Garba, 2024). Overall, Nigeria's role remains central to the future of regional peace, democratic governance, and security architecture in West Africa (Ahmadu, 2025).

1. Strengthening Regional Security Cooperation

One major implication of Nigeria's involvement in Mali and the Niger Republic is the strengthening of regional security cooperation in West Africa. Nigeria's leadership within ECOWAS has encouraged collective responses to terrorism, insurgency, political instability, and transnational crime. Through joint military operations, intelligence sharing, peacekeeping missions, and diplomatic engagement, Nigeria has helped improve coordination among West African states in addressing regional security threats (Megwalu & Garba, 2024).

Nigeria's participation in regional counterterrorism initiatives, particularly within the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) and ECOWAS security frameworks, has enhanced collective efforts against extremist groups operating across the Sahel. These interventions have contributed to improved intelligence gathering, border surveillance, and military collaboration among member states. Megwalu and Garba (2024) argue that ECOWAS security cooperation has strengthened regional mechanisms for addressing transnational threats and maintaining collective security in West Africa. Nigeria's leadership has therefore reinforced the principle that regional security challenges require

multilateral responses rather than isolated national actions. This has encouraged greater interdependence among West African states in the management of peace and security issues.

2. Promotion of Democratic Governance and Constitutional Order

Nigeria's involvement in Mali and the Niger Republic has also had important implications for democratic governance in West Africa. Through ECOWAS, Nigeria has consistently condemned military coups and unconstitutional changes of government. The country supported sanctions, diplomatic negotiations, and mediation initiatives aimed at restoring civilian rule in Mali and the Niger Republic after military takeovers (Abdulrahman et al., 2025).

These actions reinforced ECOWAS protocols on democracy and good governance and demonstrated regional opposition to military rule. Nigeria's interventions signaled that unconstitutional seizures of power would not be accepted as legitimate political transitions within West Africa. Abdulrahman et al. (2025) maintain that ECOWAS interventions in the Republic helped reinforce democratic norms and highlighted the importance of constitutional governance within the region. Furthermore, Nigeria's diplomatic pressure contributed to broader regional discussions about governance, accountability, and political stability. By advocating constitutional order, Nigeria strengthened the perception of ECOWAS as a defender of democratic governance in Africa (Aworawo, 2020).

3. Prevention of Regional Spillover of Insecurity

Another major implication of Nigeria's involvement is the prevention of the regional spread of insecurity. Instability in Mali and the Niger Republic poses direct threats to neighboring countries because terrorist organizations, armed groups, and criminal networks operate across national borders. Nigeria's interventions, therefore, serve as preventive measures aimed at containing insecurity before it spreads further across West Africa (Hudu et al., 2021).

The Sahel region has become a major hotspot for terrorism, banditry, arms trafficking, and organized crime. Nigeria's military cooperation and diplomatic engagement in Mali and Niger have helped reduce the possibility of complete state collapse, which could create safe havens for extremist organizations (Megwalu & Garba, 2024). By participating in regional peacekeeping and security initiatives, Nigeria has contributed to efforts aimed at preventing wider destabilization across the sub-region. This has important implications for trade, migration, economic development, and regional integration.

4. Consolidation of Nigeria's Regional Leadership Role

Nigeria's involvement in Mali and the Niger Republic has reinforced its position as the dominant regional power in West Africa. As the largest contributor to ECOWAS peace and security initiatives, Nigeria has demonstrated diplomatic influence, military capability, and political commitment to regional stability (Oshita & Alli, 2020).

Nigeria's leadership role has increased its influence in shaping regional security policies and conflict-management strategies. The country has often acted as the primary mediator during political crises and has played a central role in negotiations involving military juntas and transitional governments. Ahmadu (2025) explains that Nigeria remains one of the most influential actors in ECOWAS security governance and conflict mediation. This leadership position has strengthened Nigeria's diplomatic relevance in Africa and internationally. It has also reinforced the perception of Nigeria as a regional stabilizer capable of influencing political developments within West Africa.

5. Exposure of Weaknesses within ECOWAS

Despite some achievements, Nigeria's involvement in Mali and the Niger Republic has also exposed serious weaknesses within ECOWAS. The inability of ECOWAS to prevent repeated military coups and enforce democratic transitions revealed institutional limitations in the organization's peace and security architecture (Onuiri, 2025).

Although Nigeria supported sanctions and threatened military intervention after the 2023 coup in Niger Republic, ECOWAS failed to achieve a rapid return to civilian rule. The military governments in Mali and Niger resisted external pressure and consolidated their authority. This situation weakened confidence in ECOWAS's enforcement mechanisms and reduced the credibility of regional interventions (Solaru & Amodu, 2025). The withdrawal of Mali, the Niger Republic, and Burkina Faso from ECOWAS further exposed divisions within the regional bloc and weakened collective security cooperation. This development has significant implications for the future of regional integration and political cohesion in West Africa (Musa et al., 2025).

6. Increase in Anti-ECOWAS and Anti-Nigeria Sentiments

Nigeria's interventions have also generated anti-ECOWAS and anti-Nigeria sentiments in some parts of West Africa. Citizens in Mali and the Niger Republic increasingly viewed ECOWAS sanctions and diplomatic pressure as external interference in domestic affairs. Military governments exploited nationalist rhetoric to portray Nigeria and ECOWAS as agents of Western interests (Solaru & Amodu, 2025).

This perception weakened local support for regional peacebuilding efforts and created tensions between ECOWAS and military-led governments. Musa (2024) notes that

growing dissatisfaction with ECOWAS policies contributed to the formation of the Alliance of Sahel States (AES) by Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso. The rise of anti-ECOWAS sentiment has implications for regional solidarity and cooperation. It challenges Nigeria's traditional leadership role and complicates future peacekeeping and mediation efforts within the region.

7. Intensification of Geopolitical Competition in the Sahel

Nigeria's involvement in Mali and the Niger Republic has broader geopolitical implications for West Africa. The Sahel region has become an arena of competition involving Western countries, Russia, and other global actors. Mali and Niger have increasingly distanced themselves from traditional Western allies such as France and strengthened security ties with Russia (Musa, 2024).

This geopolitical realignment has complicated Nigeria's diplomatic efforts and weakened ECOWAS influence in the region. External actors often pursue competing strategic interests, thereby undermining coordinated regional approaches to security management. Scholars argue that geopolitical rivalry in the Sahel has intensified instability and weakened collective peacebuilding efforts in West Africa (Musa, 2024). Nigeria's involvement, therefore, has implications beyond West Africa because it intersects with broader global power struggles affecting security and governance in Africa.

8. Economic Implications for Regional Integration

Nigeria's peace and security involvement also affects regional economic integration in West Africa. Insecurity in Mali and Niger disrupts trade routes, investment flows, agricultural production, and regional transportation systems. By supporting peacebuilding efforts, Nigeria seeks to preserve economic stability and regional integration under ECOWAS (Jibrin, 2025).

However, political instability and sanctions imposed on military-led governments have also produced economic hardships within the region. Border closures, trade restrictions, and diplomatic tensions disrupted economic activities and affected ordinary citizens (Abdulrahman et al., 2025). Nigeria's interventions, therefore, have both stabilizing and disruptive economic implications for West Africa, depending on how regional crises are managed.

9. Reinforcement of Multilateral Conflict Management

Another important implication of Nigeria's involvement is the reinforcement of multilateral approaches to conflict management in Africa. Nigeria's preference for regional diplomacy through ECOWAS demonstrates the importance of collective African solutions to African problems (Aworawo, 2020).

Through mediation, peacekeeping, and regional negotiations, Nigeria has promoted the use of multilateral institutions in resolving conflicts rather than relying solely on unilateral military action. This has strengthened the role of ECOWAS as a regional security organization and encouraged cooperation among African states in addressing transnational challenges (Oshita & Alli, 2020). Although challenges remain, Nigeria's interventions have contributed to the development of regional peacekeeping norms and collective security arrangements in West Africa.

10. Implications for Future Regional Stability

Nigeria's continued involvement in Mali and the Niger Republic will significantly shape the future of peace and stability in West Africa. The success or failure of Nigeria's interventions will influence the credibility of ECOWAS, the future of democratic governance, and the effectiveness of regional security mechanisms (Onuiri, 2025). If Nigeria succeeds in promoting stronger regional cooperation, democratic reforms, and effective counterterrorism strategies, West Africa could experience improved stability and integration. However, if insecurity, military coups, and political fragmentation persist, the region may face deeper instability, weakened institutions, and prolonged humanitarian crises (Musa et al., 2025).

Thus, Nigeria's involvement in Mali and the Niger Republic has profound implications for peace and stability in West Africa. Its interventions have strengthened regional security cooperation, promoted democratic governance, reinforced multilateral conflict management, and helped contain the spread of insecurity. At the same time, Nigeria's involvement has exposed institutional weaknesses within ECOWAS, intensified geopolitical tensions, and generated anti-ECOWAS sentiments in parts of the Sahel. Despite these challenges, Nigeria remains central to the future of regional peacebuilding and security governance in West Africa. Sustainable peace in the region will depend largely on Nigeria's ability to work with ECOWAS member states, address structural causes of insecurity, and promote inclusive political and economic development.

Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on the Hegemonic Stability Theory. Hegemonic Stability Theory (HST) was primarily developed by Charles P. Kindleberger in 1973. Kindleberger argued that the stability of the international economic system depends on the presence of a single dominant power (hegemon) that provides public goods such as security, financial stability, and an open trading system. The theory was later expanded and formalized by Gilpin, R. (1981).

Hegemonic Stability Theory (HST) posits that a dominant or "hegemonic" state is essential for sustaining order, providing public goods, and maintaining systemic stability within a regional or international system (Kindleberger, 1973). The theory suggests that when one state possesses superior economic, military, and political capabilities relative to

its neighbors, it can establish and enforce norms, coordinate collective action, and supply public goods that smaller states are unable to provide independently.

Applied to West Africa, Nigeria's demographic size, economic capacity, and military strength position it as the de facto regional hegemon. With a population exceeding 220 million and Africa's largest economy, Nigeria possesses both the material and institutional capacity to shape regional governance, security, and economic coordination. Its hegemonic status within the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) allows it to play a decisive role in conflict resolution, peacekeeping, and diplomatic engagement across the region. The main tenets of HST are elaborated as follows:

Provision of Public Goods

HST emphasizes that the hegemon supplies critical public goods, security, political stability, and economic oversight, that smaller states are often unable to provide on their own (Kindleberger, 1973). Nigeria exemplifies this through its leadership in ECOWAS-led peacekeeping missions, contributions to regional development funds, and initiatives aimed at stabilizing states experiencing political crises. For instance, Nigeria's deployment of troops and resources in peace operations in Mali and the Niger Republic demonstrates its central role in sustaining regional security and preventing the spread of instability (Adebajo, 2020). By providing these public goods, Nigeria helps maintain an environment conducive to trade, governance, and cooperation across West Africa.

Leadership in Institutional Frameworks

Hegemonic states often assume leadership within regional organizations and help shape operational norms and strategic priorities. Nigeria's pivotal role in ECOWAS enables it to coordinate collective security measures, mediate political disputes, and set agendas for diplomatic and military interventions (Ogunnubi & Amao, 2016). This leadership is particularly important in contexts where regional institutions may be weak or under-resourced, as Nigeria's influence ensures that member states adhere to agreed protocols and commitments.

Norm-Setting and Enforcement

HST also posits that the hegemon influences governance standards, political norms, and regional expectations. Nigeria exercises this function by promoting adherence to ECOWAS protocols on democracy, good governance, and conflict prevention. Through both diplomatic engagement and, when necessary, the threat of coercive measures such as sanctions, Nigeria helps enforce compliance among member states (Kindleberger, 1973; Adebajo, 2020). By shaping these norms, the hegemon not only stabilizes the region but also enhances predictability in interstate relations.

Burden and Expectation Management

Hegemonic leadership entails significant responsibilities and costs. The hegemon is expected to commit financial, logistical, and political resources to maintain regional stability, which can create domestic and international pressures (Ogunnubi & Amao, 2016). Nigeria, as the largest and most capable state in West Africa, bears much of this burden. Other member states often rely on Nigeria to lead responses to crises, whether through peacekeeping operations, mediation, or sanctions, which can strain the country's resources and necessitate careful balancing between domestic priorities and regional commitments.

Crisis Response Capacity

A key tenet of HST is that the hegemon has the capacity to mobilize resources rapidly during crises. Nigeria demonstrates this through its ability to deploy military, economic, and diplomatic tools swiftly in response to conflicts or political instability. The country's interventions in Mali, following the 2012 and 2020 crises, and in Niger after the 2023 coup, illustrate its capacity to act decisively when regional stability is threatened. This capability reinforces the hegemon's role as a stabilizing actor, even in contexts of complex and multidimensional crises.

Thus, Hegemonic Stability Theory provides a valuable framework for understanding Nigeria's role in promoting peace and security in West Africa. It frames Nigeria as both a stabilizing force and a state bearing substantial responsibilities, highlighting the interplay between its material capabilities, leadership obligations, and normative influence within the region. By providing public goods, shaping institutional and normative frameworks, managing burdens, and responding to crises, Nigeria exemplifies the functions of a regional hegemon in line with HST principles.

Application of Theory to the Study

Hegemonic Stability Theory provides a useful lens for understanding Nigeria's role in promoting peace and security in West Africa, particularly in the cases of Mali and the Niger Republic. The theory posits that a dominant state, or hegemon, can stabilize a regional system by supplying essential public goods such as security, political stability, and economic coordination. In the West African context, Nigeria's demographic size, economic influence, and military capacity position it as the de facto regional hegemon, responsible for sustaining peace and guiding collective security initiatives within the framework of the Economic Community of West African States.

The provision of regional public goods is central to this hegemonic role. Nigeria supplies resources, leadership, and strategic direction that smaller states are unable to provide independently. Through its contributions to regional peacekeeping missions, the country

acts as a stabilizing force, deploying personnel, funding security operations, and engaging in diplomatic mediation to prevent crises from escalating beyond the capacity of the regional system.

Leadership within regional institutions is another key dimension of hegemonic influence. Nigeria's centrality in regional structures enables it to shape policy, set operational priorities, and coordinate multilateral interventions. In practical terms, this includes leading diplomatic negotiations, enforcing compliance with agreed-upon norms, and applying political pressure or sanctions when necessary to uphold democratic principles and maintain stability.

The hegemon also plays a critical role in norm-setting and enforcement. Nigeria's leadership in promoting democratic governance, good political practices, and conflict resolution mechanisms helps establish expectations for compliance among other states in the region. Through active engagement, intervention, and institutional oversight, Nigeria encourages adherence to these standards, reducing political instability and curbing the potential spread of unconstitutional power seizures.

Hegemonic leadership carries substantial responsibilities and burdens. Nigeria's proactive interventions reflect the dual nature of its role: the country wields influence and authority, yet it also bears the financial, military, and political costs of sustaining regional stability. Leading responses to crises, supporting peacekeeping operations, and mitigating conflicts requires balancing external commitments with domestic constraints, including economic pressures and internal security challenges.

The capacity to respond effectively to crises is another defining feature of hegemonic power. Nigeria's ability to mobilize resources quickly, coordinate regional missions, and engage international partners demonstrates how a hegemon can stabilize a volatile environment. Its interventions in Mali and the Niger Republic illustrate the practical application of hegemonic responsibility in maintaining order and restoring stability.

Applying this theoretical framework allows the study to examine Nigeria not merely as a participant in regional security but as a structurally influential actor whose leadership shapes outcomes across West Africa. The theory highlights the interplay between Nigeria's material capabilities, institutional engagement, normative influence, and the constraints posed by domestic and regional political dynamics. By situating Nigeria's actions within the Hegemonic Stability Theory, the study can better assess both the opportunities and challenges associated with its role as a regional security leader.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts the historical research design and uses content analysis as its method of data analysis. The historical design is appropriate because the study examines both past and

contemporary events relating to peace, security, and Nigeria's interventions in Mali and the Niger Republic. It allows for the systematic review of historical developments to better understand current security dynamics in West Africa and Nigeria's evolving role within ECOWAS. The study relies entirely on secondary data, drawn from textbooks, peer-reviewed journal articles, ECOWAS reports, government publications, policy documents, international organization reports, newspapers, and credible online sources. These materials provide documented evidence of Nigeria's involvement in regional peace and security operations and the challenges encountered.

Method of Data Collection

Data were collected through documentary review of relevant literature, archival materials, and policy documents on peace, security, regional cooperation, and Nigeria's foreign policy. Special attention was given to ECOWAS interventions in Mali (2012 coups and subsequent crises) and the Niger Republic (especially the 2023 military takeover and ECOWAS response).

Method of Data Analysis

The study adopts content analysis, which involves the systematic examination of written and documented materials to identify key themes and patterns. It was used to interpret data on Nigeria's peace and security interventions, ECOWAS policies, and the challenges affecting regional security efforts.

Through thematic analysis, key issues identified include domestic security pressures, economic constraints, institutional weaknesses within ECOWAS, geopolitical competition in the Sahel, and legitimacy challenges in intervention efforts. These themes were analyzed in relation to existing literature on peace and security to draw meaningful conclusions.

Validity and Reliability

To ensure validity and reliability, the study utilized credible sources such as peer-reviewed journals, official ECOWAS documents, and publications from recognized international organizations. Cross-checking information from multiple sources helped ensure accuracy and consistency of findings.

Justification of Methodology

The combination of historical research design and content analysis is suitable for this study because it enables a clear examination of security issues over time without the need for field data collection. It provides a comprehensive and systematic framework for analyzing Nigeria's role in regional peace and security. Overall, this methodology offers a solid foundation for understanding the historical and contemporary dimensions of Nigeria's peace and security interventions in Mali and the Niger Republic within the ECOWAS security framework.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the concepts of peace, security, and regional security in West Africa, focusing on the challenges limiting Nigeria's peace and security efforts in Mali and the Niger Republic. The analysis shows that peace and security are closely linked and cannot be achieved without addressing both immediate violence and the deeper structural causes of instability. Peace goes beyond the absence of conflict to include justice, good governance, and socioeconomic development, while security now embraces the broader idea of human security, including political and economic well-being. Regional security, therefore, depends on collective action through frameworks such as ECOWAS to manage shared threats.

The study found that West Africa continues to face serious instability, particularly in Mali and the Niger Republic, driven by coups, weak governance, and violent extremism. These challenges have made regional intervention necessary, with Nigeria playing a leading role through ECOWAS in peacekeeping, diplomacy, and conflict resolution due to its strategic political and economic influence.

However, Nigeria's efforts are constrained by several key factors. Domestically, insecurity, such as insurgency, banditry, and kidnapping, reduces its capacity to fully engage in external interventions. Economically, limited resources, rising debt, and competing development needs restrict sustained regional operations. Institutionally, disagreements within ECOWAS weaken coordinated responses, while external actors in the Sahel further complicate Nigeria's influence. In addition, issues of legitimacy and resistance from local populations in Mali and Niger reduce the effectiveness of regional interventions.

Despite these challenges, Nigeria remains central to peace and security efforts in West Africa. Its leadership within ECOWAS has helped shape regional responses to conflict and democratic crises. However, the effectiveness of these efforts depends on overcoming both internal and external constraints. In conclusion, Nigeria's role in Mali and Niger highlights both its importance and its limitations in regional security governance. Sustainable peace in West Africa will require stronger regional cooperation, improved burden-sharing, and a shift from short-term interventions to long-term strategies that address the root causes of instability.

References

- Adebajo, A. (2020). *Civil society and Nigeria's foreign policy activism in Africa*. *African Affairs*, 119(474), 1–18.
- Aning, K., & Edu-Afful, F. (2021). ECOWAS and regional security governance in West Africa. *African Security Review*, 30(2), 123–140.
- Aworawo, D. (2020). ECOWAS and conflict management in West Africa. *Journal of African Foreign Affairs*, 7(1), 45–62.
- Buzan, B. (1991). *People, states and fear: An agenda for international security studies in the post-Cold War era*. Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- Buzan, B., & Wæver, O. (2003). *Regions and powers: The structure of international security*. Cambridge University Press.
- Dowd, C., & Raleigh, C. (2022). The political marketplace in Mali: Conflict and insurgency in the Sahel. *African Affairs*, 121(484), 1–22.

- Egbadju, E. O., Ikenga, F. A., & Otite, A. (2023). Human security challenges in West Africa. *Journal of Peace and Security Studies*, 5(2), 77–95.
- Efebeh, E. V. (2021). ECOWAS and regional security in West Africa. *International Journal of Social Sciences*, 12(3), 101–115.
- Galtung, J. (1996). *Peace by peaceful means: Peace and conflict, development and civilization*. Sage.
- Gilpin, R. (1981). *War and change in world politics*. Cambridge University Press.
- Hudu, A., et al. (2021). Border security and transnational crime in West Africa. *African Security Journal*, 9(1), 55–70.
- Jibrin, M. (2025). Economic constraints and regional security operations in West Africa. *West African Policy Review*, 6(1), 88–102.
- Kindleberger, C. P. (1973). *The world in depression, 1929–1939*. University of California Press.
- Lederach, J. P. (1997). *Building peace: Sustainable reconciliation in divided societies*. United States Institute of Peace Press.
- Megwalu, A., & Garba, S. (2024). Security challenges in the Sahel and ECOWAS interventions. *Journal of African Security Studies*, 11(2), 33–58.
- Musa, H. (2024). Geopolitical competition in the Sahel region. *International Journal of African Studies*, 8(1), 14–29.
- Musa, H., et al. (2025). The Alliance of Sahel States and ECOWAS relations. *West African Affairs Review*, 10(2), 65–82.
- Ogunnubi, O., & Amao, O. (2016). Nigeria as a regional hegemon in West Africa. *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations*, 10(3), 1–12.
- Okolie, U. C. (2022). Nigeria and regional security in West Africa. *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 40(2), 201–215.
- Okolie, U. C., Onyema, E., & Basey, T. (2019). ECOWAS and peacekeeping operations in West Africa. *African Security Review*, 28(4), 344–360.
- Oshita, O., & Alli, W. O. (2020). Nigeria's foreign policy and regional security in Africa. *Nigerian Journal of International Affairs*, 46(1), 55–73.
- Onuiri, S. (2025). ECOWAS and democratic governance in West Africa. *African Governance Review*, 9(1), 23–40.
- Orhero, A. E. (2020). Human security and peacebuilding in West Africa. *Journal of Social Sciences and Policy*, 15(2), 112–130.
- Orhero, A. E., & Okolie, U. C. (2023). Regional security and ECOWAS interventions in West Africa. *African Peace and Conflict Review*, 6(1), 1–19.
- Solaru, O. E., & Amodu, A. (2025). ECOWAS and the Niger Republic crisis. *African Journal of Stability and Development*, 3(1), 45–60.
- United Nations Development Programme. (1994). *Human development report 1994: New dimensions of human security*. Oxford University Press.
- Umukoro, N., Obagbinoko, I., & Efebeh, E. V. (2025). Counterterrorism and regional security in the Sahel. *Journal of African Strategic Studies*, 7(2), 90–108.