INVESTIGATING THE EFFECT OF IRREGULAR MIGRATION ON NIGERIA'S SECURITY IN THE NORTH-WEST

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Abstract

This study investigates the effect of irregular migration on Nigeria's security in the North-West, a region increasingly vulnerable to complex security challenges. Irregular migration, characterized by undocumented movement across porous borders, has become a critical concern as it intersects with local instability, weak border governance, and transnational criminal networks. The research problem centers on how irregular migration contributes to the escalation of security threats in Nigeria's North-West, an area already burdened by armed banditry, communal clashes, and socio-political tensions. Drawing on qualitative analysis of policy documents and security reports, the study explores the political, social, and security dimensions of this phenomenon. Findings reveal that politically, irregular migration undermines the legitimacy of state institutions by exposing their inability to control borders and manage demographic pressures effectively. Socially, it intensifies competition over scarce resources, deepens communal divisions, and contributes to rising xenophobic sentiments against perceived "foreign" settlers. From a security perspective, irregular migration creates opportunities for armed groups and criminal networks to recruit fighters, smuggle weapons, and establish cross-border safe havens, thereby complicating counterinsurgency and anti-banditry efforts. The study concludes that irregular migration significantly amplifies existing vulnerabilities in Nigeria's North-West, requiring comprehensive and coordinated policy responses. It recommends strengthening border management through technological surveillance and community-based reporting systems, enhancing regional cooperation with neighbouring countries, and addressing the socio-economic drivers that compel irregular movement. By adopting a multidimensional approach, Nigeria can mitigate the destabilizing impacts of irregular migration and enhance human security in the North-West region.

Key Words: *Migration, Irregular Migration, Security, Nigeria, Effect*

INTRODUCTION

Irregular migration has evolved into a major issue in Nigeria, which poses serious threats to both national securities along with stability. Nigeria functions as the largest economy in Africa and its most populous nation, so it acts as both an entry and a passage point for irregular immigrants on their journey to find foreign opportunities. Nigerians move abroad illegally because they face economic difficulty and political instability, together with unemployment and unfavorable environmental conditions. National security experiences major adverse effects from growing irregular migration despite ongoing attempts to control migration

through legal structures and international agreements (Akindoyin, 2024).

The main worry about unlawful migration in Nigeria stems from its connection to criminal enterprises in trafficking and drugs, and the spread of weapons (Ojiakor, 2021). The open borders of Nigeria allow undocumented individuals to pass through easily, and this enables criminal groups to perpetuate their activities. Boko Haram, alongside bandit militias, exploit irregular migration paths to conduct their own activities, including expansion of their territories and smuggling caches of illegal materials.

The unpredictable movement of people creates extensive economic strain and damages Nigeria's social service systems. Nigeria loses workforce productivity capabilities because skilled or unskilled workers migrate abroad. The entry of unlawful immigrants from nearby nations into Nigeria leads to an additional burden on public service infrastructure that includes healthcare, education, and safety systems. Irregular migration leads to dual effects that cause ongoing socio-economic problems, which generate local population resentment and boost tensions that threaten ethnic groups (Albert-Makyur, 2022). This heightened resentment can escalate tensions among ethnic groups, as competition and cultural misunderstandings emerge, ultimately threatening social cohesion and stability within affected societies.

The Nigerian government works together with international partners like the African Union and ECOWAS while implementing policies to control irregular migration. The government focuses on improving border protection alongside public education initiatives and helping return migrants reintegrate into society to eliminate the basic drivers that force people to migrate irregularly. The ongoing challenges of corruption and weak law enforcement, together with restricted employment possibilities, impede the implementation of migrant protection measures.

Thus, irregular migration has emerged as a critical security concern for Nigeria, posing significant threats to the country's stability and social cohesion. The continuous flow of unauthorized migrants over Nigeria's borders has engendered numerous security challenges, such as human trafficking, arms proliferation, and transnational crime. The porous nature of Nigeria's borders facilitates unregulated migration, permitting the incursion of extremist factions like Boko Haram and various armed militias, hence exacerbating domestic insecurity. Moreover, irregular migration burdens national resources, intensifying socio-economic issues like as unemployment, urban overcrowding, and reliance on public services.

Notwithstanding numerous policy initiatives, such as the National Migration Policy (2015) and the Nigeria Immigration Service Border Management Strategy, Nigeria persists in facing challenges related to efficient border control and migration management. The inability to monitor and control irregular migrants presents threats to internal security, including heightened criminal activities and potential radicalization. Moreover, irregular migration exacerbates tensions between local inhabitants and migrant communities, resulting in social unrest. Although prior research has explored the socio-economic ramifications of irregular migration, there exists a deficiency of studies assessing its direct effects on Nigeria's security framework.

This study, therefore, seeks to investigate the effect of irregular migration on security in the Nigerian North East region, existing countermeasures, and propose strategies for mitigating these challenges to enhance national stability. Solving

irregular migration in Nigeria needs a broad strategy mixing policy changes and regional partnerships, and sustainable development methods to decrease its negative impact on national security.

THE CONCEPT OF MIGRATION

People who relocate from one domestic area to another, separately between different national territories, become migrants. The transfer of individuals carries the definition of crossing established political borders for permanent or semi-permanent settlement, though different groups interpret it differently. Staying in a new territory for six months qualifies someone as a migrant (Akindoyin, 2024a). Internal migration refers to a change of residency within a single country, whereas international migration pertains to a change of residence between two distinct countries (Bernard, and Perales, 2022).

Human migration occurs mainly because people move for security reasons, economic opportunities, and criminal activities involving trafficking or smuggling (Szablewska, 2022). The activity which qualifies as migration according to De Andrade involves people moving across different distances between countries through border crossings for both temporary and longer stays for short-lasting and frequent economic opportunities and criminal activities (De Andrade, 2023). A full understanding of migration requires distinguishing its various forms because countries today encounter three primary migration types: labour migration and refugee acceptance, together with permanent population establishment.

Government attempts to stop or control migrant movements fail to prevent most migratory chains from evolving into new movement types. Starting intentions for migration across national borders between Nigeria and neighboring nations can transform into different purposes before migration completes (Abumere and Sanni, 2022). The gap between living standards across facilities runs exceptionally wide between Nigeria and all adjacent countries. International migration is currently changing due to domestic politics alongside national security strategies, together with bilateral and regional partnerships, which have led to migration becoming more political. Countries in the global north have based their evolving foreign policies on security requirements in recent years. Universal economic integration has intensified security-related migration problems, which now determine how countries in the sub-region develop their diplomatic and foreign relations decisions.

According to historical records, the Bantu people migrated substantial numbers of people out of modern-day Nigeria and Cameroon to colonize the entire southern half of Africa (Grollemund, 2023). The process of migration becomes more complex due to transformations in the economy and politics, and society. Migration throughout the West African sub-region depends mainly on economic factors, but various other factors contribute, with economics taking precedence. According to neo-classical theory, migration emerges due to the movement from low to high-income regions and, more specifically, results from extreme changes in the business cycle. The analytical methods operate under the name of push-pull theories.

Economic limitations combined with political oppression function as push factors, which work alongside labour opportunities coupled with good economic conditions and liberal political systems as pull factors (O'reilly, 2023). West African migration has generally occurred according to this systematic pattern. The existence of economic disparities between

different areas provides enough reason for people to migrate. The entire continent demonstrates this pattern since populations move from impoverished regions to thriving, economically successful areas. Average income matches the overall decline of transit fares, while communication methods have experienced improved accessibility.

Africans have moved across many territories throughout history, either as pastoral tribes or diverse groups of merchants or military occupiers, or displaced populations (Galaty, 2021). Apart from the West African sub-region, significant population movements occur because of economic, social, and political challenges. The practice dates back to when African countries were yet to gain independence, through a time when the concept of international borders became significant during the 1884 Berlin Conference partitions of Africa. Colonial administrations, through their partition plan, established confined movements between territories through which authorities deployed verification procedures for foreign persons seeking entry (Berda, 2022). Even though border control mechanisms remain in place, irregular migrants still prefer unauthorized paths to reach their destinations by crossing borders illegally.

IRREGULAR MIGRATION

Over the years, the concept of irregular migration has been extensively debated by political scientists. Thus, political scientists utilize migration terminology which generates different implications between unlawful, undocumented and non-documented, and unauthorized migration. The act of staying in a country without proper documentation leads to an administrative violation instead of classification as a criminal offense in most global territories (Rabkin and Lerner 2022). Although the United Nations uses

the terms 'irregular' and 'undocumented' migration, their previous utilization of 'illegal migration' lasted until the European Commission accepted both phrases 'irregular migration' and 'undocumented migration.' These four terms, "illegal," "irregular," "undocumented," and "unauthorized," are used throughout this paper. Irregular migration refers to the movement of individuals across national boundaries in contravention of the immigration regulations of the host nation (Triandafyllidou, 2023). Movement of unauthorized people who try to enter a specified country without official permission stands as another definition of the concept.

The process of relocating to another place or passage destination takes place beyond the regulatory bounds established by the home country and transit nations, as well as the host nation for migration movement. According to Akindoyin (2024b), irregular migrants can fall into one or multiple categories based on their violation of either entering or residing without proper documentation or employment without authorization in the country.

People who cross Nigerian borders illegally to live in the country are classified as irregular immigrants (Leerkes, 2012). These individual entities or collective entities break the immigration laws of the host nation, intending to reside in the country. Unauthorized immigrants also go by the name undocumented immigrants since irregular immigrants represent their classification (Lucchesi and Romania, 2024). The term irregular immigrant describes individuals who stay in an unauthorized area where authorities lack documentation on their identity. Legal entry for tourism and education purposes functions as an inclusion criterion, but individuals classified in this way become irregular when they do not

leave after the expiration of their approved stay. Their lawful entry at first does not prevent them from becoming irregular due to violating the authorized time of residence. According to official classification, immigrants become undocumented when their documentation has expired or they came with false papers.

The increase in criminal activities throughout northwestern states derives primarily from illegal migrants using multiple weak border crossings between Sokoto, Kebbi, Katsina, and Jigawa States (Garba, 2021). Irregular migrants drive all cases that threaten North West's security as well as Nigeria's security through ethnic and internal conflicts and additional violent crimes (Garba, 2021). Various criminal activities find their origin in irregular migration since it leads to armed robbery, along with kidnapping incidents and farmer-herder conflicts, as well as community violence and insurgent attacks, and diverse other crimes.

The irregular migrant situation in Nigeria shows complex patterns which has grown more common during recent times, leading to rising undocumented movements both into and out of the country. This trend complicates migration governance and deepens social, economic, and security challenges nationwide. Global human flux will continue in its current substantial form until all the migration-causing social and economic disparities disappear (Garba, 2021). The adverse consequences of irregular migration harm Nigerian society and its residents to an extent that requires swift action along with defensive steps. This is because it burdens Nigeria's economy by increasing unemployment and fostering informal settlements. Socially, it fuels resentment and conflict between migrants and locals. Security-wise, it can enable trafficking and cross-border crime. The gravity of this threat requires immediate attention from Nigeria since the response time has passed its prime.

CAUSES OF IRREGULAR MIGRATION IN NIGERIA

Different sets of factors trigger irregular migration among individual people and various communities. The "push factor" framework describes the necessary conditions at a person's departure location, which prompt migration because of starvation and drought, and poor agricultural results combined with joblessness. Migrants respond to favorable conditions existing in foreign locations that constitute a "pull factor." The causes encompass the following:

Poverty: Economic models that analyze the wealth gaps between home and host countries do not directly demonstrate that irregular immigrants always fall below their country's poverty line. Emerging nation citizens who lack sufficient resources to migrate illegally also lack contacts in the destination country. Nigeria stands in position among all petroleum-producing nations as the eighth-largest exporting country and tenth-largest proved reserves in the world (Adedara and Adetifa, 2022). Despite the nation's substantial oil resources, a significant portion of Nigerians, specifically 71% of the population, reside in abject poverty, according to the United Nations in 2024.

It is pertinent to know that poverty drives migration in Nigeria by pushing individuals to seek better opportunities elsewhere. Limited jobs, low wages, and inadequate infrastructure compel many to leave rural areas or migrate abroad in search of livelihoods. This economic desperation often outweighs migration risks, making relocation, whether internal or international, a survival strategy for countless Nigerians facing persistent hardship.

Overpopulation: An increase in population that exceeds the carrying capacity of a region results in overpopulation. Increases in human population result in problems such as pollution, water scarcity, and poverty. Akindoyin (2024), contends that immigration functions as a "relief valve" for overpopulation, averting the consequences of excess population and redistributing this congestion to a nation. According to the United Nations (2024), Nigeria's population growth rate is 2.61%, with one in five Africans being Nigerian, accounting for 2.64% of the global population. Based on the aforementioned indices, it can be concluded that Nigeria is experiencing significant population pressure and may be nearing a state of overpopulation, which may contribute to both legal and illegal migration.

Family Reunification: Some undocumented immigrants strive to live with their relatives, such as spouses or other family members. Legal residents or naturalized citizens may apply for family reunification visas to lawfully facilitate the entry of their family members into a destination state; however, these visas may be limited in number and subject to annual quotas.

Wars and Asylum: Illegal immigration may be motivated by the necessity to escape civil war, oppression, genocide, and political or religious persecution in the country of origin, exemplified by the Rohingya in Myanmar, the 1994 Rwandan genocide, and the insurgency in Nigeria, among others. Additional issues include unemployment, limited educational opportunities, lack of social safety nets, poor governance, corruption, and a shortfall in social justice, equity, and fairness, among others. According to the United Nations (2024), the youth unemployment rate in Nigeria is at 52.7%, likely acting as a substantial push factor for illegal migration among this at-risk cohort.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative research design to investigate the effect of irregular migration on Nigeria's security in the North-West. The choice of qualitative analysis allows for an in-depth exploration of complex dimensions associated with irregular migration. The research draws primarily on secondary data, including a systematic analysis of policy documents, security reports, and relevant scholarly literature, particularly from 2015 to 2024. Key policy documents include national migration policies, border security strategies, and legislative frameworks addressing migration management and counter-terrorism. Security reports from government agencies such as the Nigeria Immigration Service, Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corps, and the Ministry of Interior provide critical insights into documented incidents and patterns of irregular migration and associated security threats. The data were subjected to thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns, trends, and underlying factors linking irregular migration to regional insecurity. Special attention was paid to indicators such as infiltration by radical elements, communal tensions, and resource-driven conflicts intensified by irregular migrant flows. By triangulating policy analysis with security reports, the research ensures a comprehensive understanding of both the structural and immediate impacts of irregular migration.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Evaluating the Effects of Irregular Migration on Nigeria's Security

Irregular immigration profoundly affects Nigeria's security, particularly in the North West area. Thus, for the purposes of this discussion, the concerns related to irregular migration can be classified into

the risks faced by irregular migrants and the difficulties encountered by host or receiving communities. These repercussions might be categorized as political, social, security, and economic challenges.

Political effects

In Northern Nigeria, Machiavellian political parties often enlist undocumented immigrants to vote, taking advantage of the permeable borders with Niger and Chad. Undocumented immigrants are often employed by unscrupulous politicians as tools to commit crimes, hence raising worries over national security. Forty Beninois possessed Nigeria's Permanent Voter's Card (PVC) during the 2023 General Elections (Ogunbanjo, 2024). Undocumented immigrants may illegally register on the voter registers, so they can claim citizenship and form a voting bloc for political parties. Unemployed undocumented immigrants may be manipulated by political parties to provoke political violence, as evidenced in some areas of northern Nigeria, especially Kano State, during the recently concluded 2019 general election.

Elections and electoral operations in Nigeria may be undermined by Nigerian citizens and nationals from neighbouring countries, owing to border proximity and poor governance. Non-Nigerians can and do leverage the broad and complex boundaries, marital ties, and various business incentives to visit Nigeria, register, and engage in elections. Some of these extraterrestrials may claim dual citizenship, although this may not accurately represent the actual circumstances (Ogunbanjo, 2024). Unethical politicians may enlist and manipulate such individuals to undermine lawful elections in the nation. Genuine Nigerians may also engage in electoral misconduct or disrupt elections and effortlessly relocate to other nations.

The influx of undocumented migrants from bordering West African nations into Nigeria affects inter-state ties due to conflicting interests. The receiving state aims to remove illegal, unskilled migrants, who adversely affect the nation, but the sending states favour their prolonged residence in the receiving states, as these migrants constitute a liability for their place of origin. The presence of Nigerian illegal and undocumented migrants in developed nations affects bilateral relations. A significant proportion of Nigerians report experiencing intrusive and often adverse scrutiny imposed by foreign immigration authorities and security officials. The imprisonment and deportation of Nigerians in numerous industrialized countries for various reasons, including but not limited to immigration infractions such as fraud, insufficient travel papers, or overstaying, negatively affect Nigeria's reputation. Nigerians involved in illegal or unauthorized migration encounter various cruel conditions at embassies and high commissions when attempting to leave the country for their desired destinations. National security is compromised due to several migratory challenges (Akindoyin, 2022c). Security fundamentally pertains to a sovereign state's need to protect its sovereignty, territorial integrity, citizens, and their values.

Social effect

The influx of unauthorized or undocumented migrants into a nation-state poses security threats to that nation-state. Deportees are likely to provide considerable social and environmental hazards not just to themselves but also to the Nigerian populace in the receiving states. The bulk of undocumented immigrants are either unemployed or lack employability, leading to insufficient financial resources; consequently, they do not have proper housing. In Kano State, most undocumented immigrants inhabit

areas beneath bridges, flyovers, or in incomplete buildings, while some have erected temporary shelters in recreational spaces (Akindoyin, 2024b). They inhabit unclean, destitute conditions in a polluted environment. The substandard living conditions devoid of vital amenities can propagate illnesses to others.

The security implications are that these persons may become public liabilities and are susceptible to recruitment by insurgents or other criminal elements. A considerable number of migrants from the Niger Republic, Mali, and Chad have turned to begging nationwide owing to a deficiency in employable skills. Furthermore, owing to their inability to get suitable accommodation, a substantial proportion of illegal or undocumented migrants remain in slums and improvised living conditions. The influx of illegal immigrants in Nigeria can place more strain on the social amenities provided by the nation-state to its citizens. The nation-state, still hindered by insufficient economic planning, may regard it as a liability and potentially undercut governmental initiatives.

Security effect

Since attaining independence in 1960, Nigeria's internal security has been compromised by transnational criminal enterprises, encompassing arms trafficking, human trafficking, drug trafficking, banditry, vehicle theft, smuggling, unregulated migration, illegal logging, oil bunkering, and the transhumance activities of pastoralists who cross national borders without adherence to regulations. Other concerns encompass terrorism, insurgency, abduction of expatriates, misuse of expatriate quotas, breaches of immigration laws, document forgery, and financial offences.

The North-Western area of Nigeria is globally acknowledged for an increasing crime rate likely intensified by illegal immigrants (Adejumo, 2021). Unauthorized or undocumented migrants pose security issues to the northern states of Nigeria, mostly due to porous borders. Security threats dissuade investors from participating in a nation-state, as these circumstances are regarded as perilous for business, especially with terrorism risks (Akindoyin, 2024b). The predominant illegal or undocumented immigrants in Nigeria originate from nearby West African countries and are frequently not the desired immigrants due to their minimal or absent skill levels, which fail to optimize Nigeria's productivity (Obi-Ani, 2020).

Terrorism has arisen as a worldwide phenomenon, with illegal immigrants regarded as principal enablers and participants in terrorist activities. It is posited that among the undocumented migrants, there is a potential presence of extremist elements who may exploit migration channels to infiltrate the country and engage in acts of terrorism. The exportation of Islamic extremism into Nigeria intensifies the security difficulties, especially in northern Nigeria. Individuals primarily from Sahel and Western Sahara nations have been linked to religious uprisings in Nigeria (Akindoyin, 2022c). Imported religious ideologies and perspectives have sometimes challenged the secular nature of the Nigerian state. Undocumented migrants primarily engage in illegal activities due to their status; hence, when many violations occur, the perpetrators are frequently unidentifiable. In regions with a greater density of illegal immigrants, the incidence of crime increases, encompassing offences such as armed robbery, theft, abduction, and banditry, among others.

In Nigeria, the notion that illegal immigration intensifies religious conflicts has gained prominence, especially among state officials. In the 1980s, they attracted

significant public attention due to the Matatsine religious disturbances in Kano, Maiduguri, and Kaduna. Undocumented immigration substantially influenced the Maitatsine religious riots in Kano, leading to multiple deaths (Bala and Inuwa, 2023). The disaster caused extensive damage to both governmental and private properties in the region. In a lecture entitled "Challenges of Modern Migration Management: The Role of Nigeria Immigration Service" at the National Defence College (NDC), Nigeria, for course 26 participants, the Comptroller General of the Nigeria Immigration Service asserted that irregular migration constitutes a threat to national security. It was asserted that countries receiving illegal migrants would face criminality and a danger to their social standards.

The Comptroller General clarified that the influx of irregular migrants to Libya is due to the lack of central control, where warlords exploit migrants as a replacement for oil deals. The persistent occurrences of illegal border crossings, including individuals suspected to be Fulani herders migrating from neighbouring countries, especially Chad, can be ascribed to the permeable characteristics of the nation's borders. The border's proximity promotes the illegal distribution of small arms and light weapons, allowing Fulani herdsmen, especially from Chad and Niger, to obtain firearms inexpensively.

Similarly, the porous nature of the border has led to an unwelcome flood of migrants from neighbouring countries, and the combination of illegal migrants and the proliferation of weaponry has intensified the security issues in Nigeria (Oladapo, 2021). The spread of Small Arms and Light Weapons poses a substantial security challenge now facing Nigeria, Africa, and the international community. The illegal trade and distribution of small arms and light weapons (SALW) have become a driving force for insecurity in Kano State, leading to criminal activities including communal conflict, political instability, kidnapping, and armed robbery, all of which have considerably intensified the region's insecurity (Oladapo, 2021).

Economic effect

Illegal migrants provide both advantageous and adverse economic impacts on the countries of origin and destination. Illegal immigrants reduce unemployment in their country of origin while increasing it in the host country. Although illegal immigrants indeed fill roles that citizens reject, it is equally true that these migrant's appropriate jobs that legally belong to citizens (Akindoyin, 2024b). The uncontrollable influx of illegal or undocumented migration can result in destabilization within a nation-state. The influx of illegal immigrants causes unemployment in the host state and contributes to increased inflation rates for key goods. Their covert status leads to unrecorded statistics, making it unfeasible to budget accurately for their requirements. As a result, this may result in shortages of essential food products or inflationary pressures, as undocumented migrants cannot lawfully transfer monies via commercial banks. They engage in smuggling and currency trafficking, while others turn to the underground market for the exchange of various national currencies as commodities. Undocumented immigrants strain the state economy by increasing the financial burden on the government.

Illegal immigrants often increase the demands on the government of the host locality or nation, hence intensifying the financial burden on essential sectors such as education and healthcare (Akindoyin, 2022c). According to Akindoyin (2022c) immigrants occupy roles that would otherwise be held by residents; in certain situations, this may result in competition and conflict owing to the marginalization

of native inhabitants and a lack of employment opportunities. Moreover, illegal migration contributes to population explosion, leading to a substantial increase in the host nation's populace and negatively impacting its economic and social progress.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, a complicated interaction of political, social, and security factors that influence the stability of the region has been uncovered by this study on the effect of irregular migration on North-West Nigerian security. Nigeria's ability to uphold social order and security in this region has been severely strained by irregular migration, which is fueled by porous borders, poor governance, economic hardship, and a lack of regional cooperation.

Politically, irregular migration has made governance more difficult by eroding the legitimacy and power of the Nigerian government. Uncontrolled cross-border migration makes it more difficult to manage population data, plan elections, and distribute resources, and it frequently causes conflict within local communities and mistrust of government agencies. Additionally, it has exacerbated views of state indifference, which armed groups can use to garner support and erode political authority.

Local demographics have changed as a result of irregular migration, and competition for scarce economic opportunities, fertile land, and public services like healthcare and education has increased. Between migrant populations and host communities, these pressures have fueled animosity and resentment, which have occasionally escalated into violent altercations. Community cohesion is further undermined by cultural disruption and the breakdown of traditional structures, which increases the susceptibility of North-West societies to extremist recruitment and narratives.

From a security standpoint, the uncontrolled migration wave, which may include members of radical or organized crime groups, directly threatens national security. Human traffickers, arms smugglers, and terrorist networks frequently take advantage of irregular migration routes, opening doors for illegal trade and the spread of violent extremism. This has exacerbated communal violence, banditry, kidnappings, and the spread of small arms, all of which compromise public safety.

Thus, the North-West of Nigeria is increasingly vulnerable due to the interconnected and mutually reinforcing political, social, and security effects of irregular migration. A comprehensive approach that incorporates improved border management, inclusive governance, socioeconomic development, and regional cooperation is needed to address these effects and guarantee that migration is better controlled and its detrimental effects are lessened for long-term peace and security.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study hereby recommends the following:
1. Boost border security and surveillance: The Nigerian government ought to spend money on cutting-edge border management systems, such as biometric data collection and sophisticated surveillance technologies. Enhancing border control agencies' capabilities with training and sufficient funding will help lower the number of undocumented migrants and restrict the flow of criminal organizations that take advantage of these routes.

2. Strengthen regional cooperation and intelligence sharing: To improve cross-border intelligence collection and coordinated patrols, Nigeria should strengthen its cooperation with its neighbours within organizations like ECOWAS. These initiatives will dismantle transnational criminal networks and trafficking networks that profit from unauthorized migration routes.

3. Encourage community-based integration and conflict resolution: To ease tensions between host communities and migrants, local government representatives, civil society organizations, and traditional leaders should collaborate. Initiatives that promote understanding, social cohesion, and peaceful coexistence include dialogue platforms, cultural exchange programs, and sensitization campaigns.

4. The government and development partners should invest in job creation, vocational training, and rural development projects in both migrant-sending and host communities to address the underlying causes of irregular migration. Enhancing infrastructure, healthcare, and educational opportunities will contribute to regional stabilization and provide alternatives to migration.

5. Create thorough data systems and migration policies: Nigeria must revise its migration laws to take into account contemporary circumstances and give human security top priority. To address the issues associated with irregular migration, it will be possible to implement evidence-based policymaking, efficient planning, and focused interventions by establishing trustworthy migration data systems.

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