



THE ANATOMY OF A FRAGILE STATE

Insurgency, Structural Vulnerability, and the
Imperative for Human Security in Nigeria

Based on the research of Professor Mojúbàolú Olufúnké Okome

The Human Toll Dashboard

The Macro Facade

Status: Africa's Largest Economy

Mo Ibrahim Index: High scores in National Security

Security Budget: £4 Billion annually

The Micro Reality

133 Million

Citizens living in **multidimensional poverty** (72% of the rural population; 42% urban).

300,000+

Estimated deaths caused directly by Boko Haram depredations since 2009.

3 Million

Internally displaced persons (IDPs) lacking adequate response from state agencies.

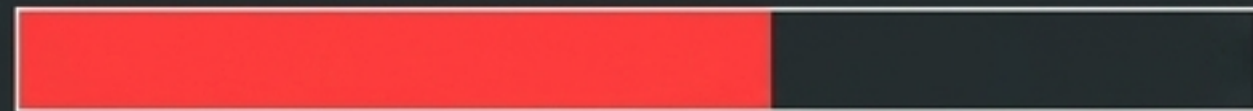
Low

Mo Ibrahim Index ranking for Personal Security.

The Educational Blackout: Erasing a Generation

~20 Million

Out-of-school children in Nigeria
(1 in 3 Nigerian children).



60% of these out-of-school children are female.

2009–Present

Over **300 targeted attacks** on schools by Boko Haram.

November 2025

Federal Government officially closes **47 Unity Schools** in Northern Nigeria to prevent mass abductions.

Late 2025

11 states (including Kebbi, Kwara, Niger, and Bauchi) partially or fully close schools due to the terror of kidnappers, bandits, and the new Lakurawa group.

Fear and insecurity are enduring realities, replacing the constitutional right to education with the trauma of ransom and abduction.

The Evolution of Insurgency: From Terror to Parallel State

Dimension	Boko Haram	Lakurawa
Origin & Evolution	Emerged ~2009 following the Maitatsine millenarian movement. Splintered into factions (e.g., Al Qaeda affiliates).	Formed ~2017 from armed Malian/Nigerien herders invited as vigilantes to fight local bandits. Turned against host communities. Declared a terror group in Jan 2025.
Area of Operation	Primarily the Northeast (Borno, Yobe, Adamawa).	Northwest borderlands (Sokoto, Kebbi) and across the Niger border.
Ideology & Affiliation	Salafi-Jihadist; imposition of a warped interpretation of Islam.	Affiliated with Islamic State Sahel Province (ISSP).
Tactics & Capabilities	Suicide bombings, mass abductions (Chibok) , destruction of state infrastructure .	Armed with explosives and surveillance drones . Operates sophisticated social media propaganda . Targeted by US Christmas Day 2025 airstrikes .
Governance Strategy	Territorial control through absolute terror and obliteration of opposition .	Parallel governance : imposing strict Sharia and collecting taxes (zakat) from local populations.

Re-diagnosing the State: Fragile, Not Failed

Moving past the dystopic post-Cold War framework

The Failed State Paradigm

(Kaplan / Helman & Ratner)

- Characteristics: Total anarchy, completely disrupted food supplies, economies at a standstill.
- The Corrective: Tantamount to putting the state in receivership by Western powers.
- Why it doesn't fit Nigeria: Despite massive insecurity, Nigeria maintains the largest economy in Africa and functions effectively in certain sectors and geographies.

The Fragile State Reality

(OECD / DFID)

- Characteristics: A fundamental failure to meet citizens' basic needs; unable to assure basic security or maintain the rule of law for the majority, especially the poor.
- The Core Issue: Weak state legitimacy and the failure to create a binding social contract.
- The Corrective: A process on a continuum. Improvement is possible when state aspiration is combined with political will and determination.

The Anatomy of a Vacuum

Insurgency is not an external infection; it is an opportunistic bloom within the absence of the state.

Elite Indifference & Social Disconnect

Nouveau riche and political elites distance themselves from the embattled rural poor. Poverty is viewed as an inevitable fate rather than a state failure.

The Vacuum Parallel Governance (Boko Haram / Lakurawa)

Extreme Multidimensional Poverty

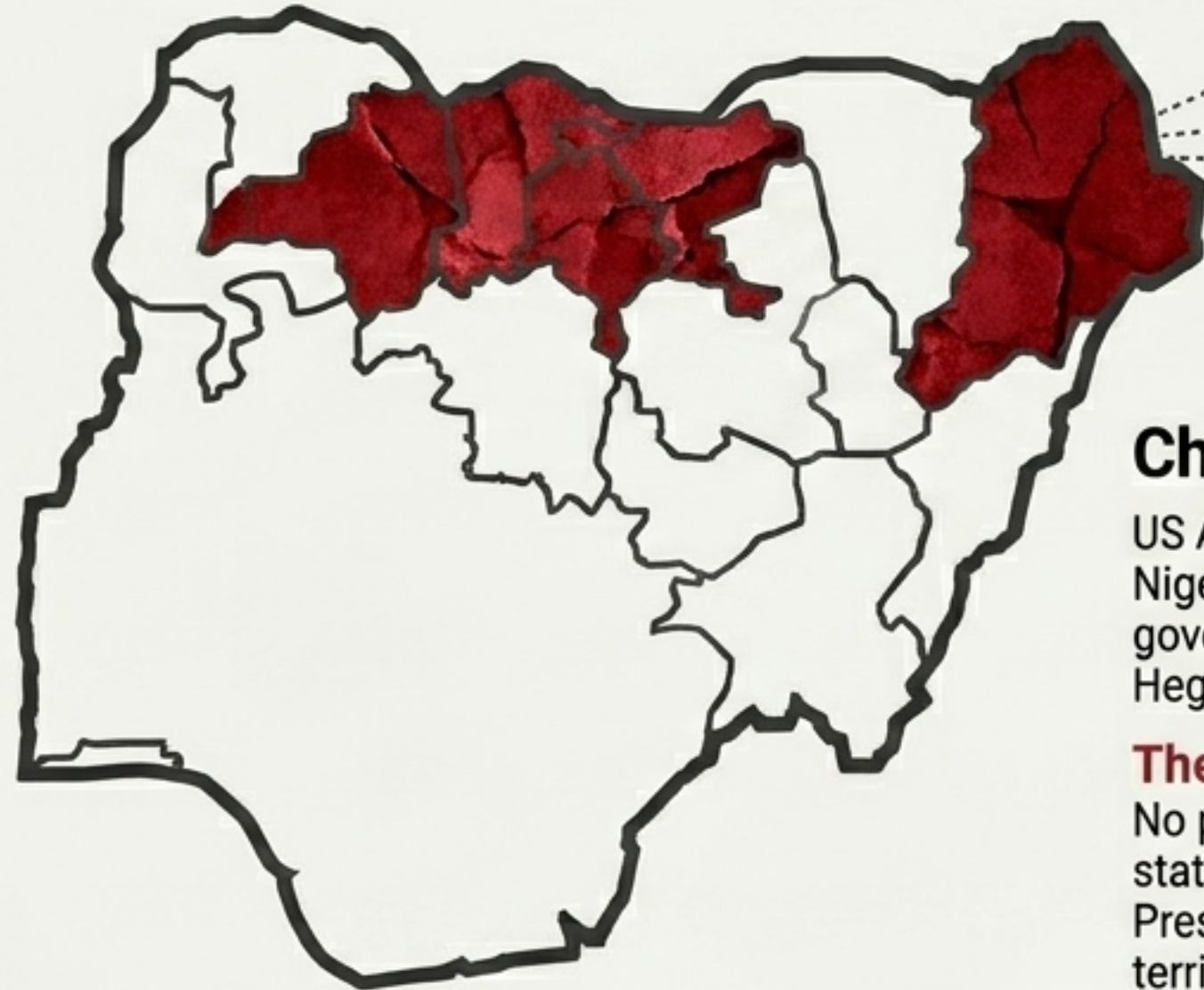
133 million citizens deprived of health, education, and basic living standards, providing a **ready army of recruits** for extremist groups.

Military Incompetence & Corruption

Despite **massive budgets**, the military is **out-gunned**. **Massive embezzlement** prevents constitutional protection of territorial integrity.

The Geography of Apathy

The empathetic distance between the Nigerian political elite and the rural crisis.



Christmas Day 2025

US Airstrikes target Lakurawa in Northern Nigeria, in coordination with the Nigerian government. US Secretary of War Pete Hegseth announces the strikes.

The Reality:

No public announcement or casualty statistics are provided by the Nigerian President regarding his own sovereign territory.

Lagos

The Nigerian President attends the Eyo Festival.

Europe

Leaves for an end-of-year holiday three days post-bombing.

Abu Dhabi

Official visit; releases AI-enhanced photos with Rwanda's President Kagame while the North burns.

Core Insight: The farther the distance of the wealthy from the Boko Haram/Lakurawa epicenters, the more entrenched the determination to carry on "business as usual."

The Illusion of Force: Military Capacity vs. Corruption

£4 Billion

Annual Nigerian military budget.

\$1 Billion

Additional defense budget requested during the Goodluck Jonathan administration.

Out-gunned: Nigerian armed forces consistently out-resourced by insurgent groups.

Mutiny & Morale: 54 soldiers court-martialed and sentenced to death for mutinying after refusing to confront Boko Haram without adequate weapons.

Grand Theft: Widespread embezzlement of public funds meant for outfitting the military, exemplified by the \$9.3M cash smuggling scandal in South Africa.

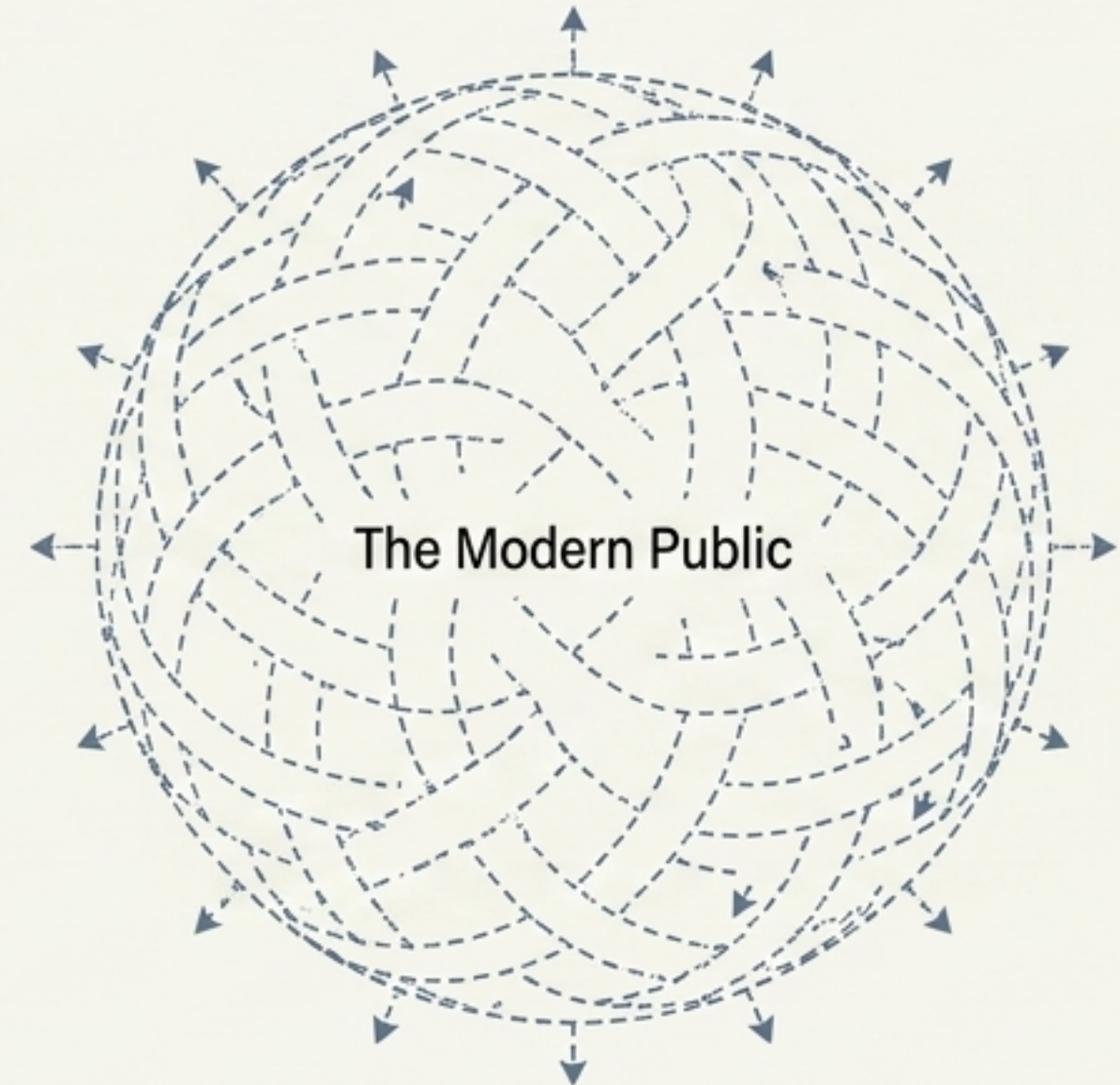
Takeaway: The state has failed its fundamental Weberian test—it cannot uphold a monopoly on the legitimate use of physical force.

Understanding Apathy: The 'Two Publics'

Why the mass slaughter in the North generates little generalized national outrage. (Based on Peter Ekeh's 1975 framework)



- **Definition:** The realm of kinship, ethnic, and 'tribal' groups.
- **Dynamic:** Highly organized. Individuals act responsibly; accountability exists.



- **Definition:** The realm of the nation-state (a legacy of colonial administration).
- **Dynamic:** Viewed primarily as an alien resource for looting. The state treats citizens as 'subjects,' resulting in a lack of a binding social contract.

The Result: Citizens outside conflict zones view the insurgency not as a threat to collective national sovereignty, but merely as the isolated problem of the vulnerable poor in a different region.

Civil Society vs. The Defensive State

Grassroots Mobilization

- The #BringBackOurGirls Movement
- A homegrown coalition of women's rights organizations demanding accountability for abducted citizens.
 - Poorly resourced and reliant on volunteerism, struggling against generalized national apathy.

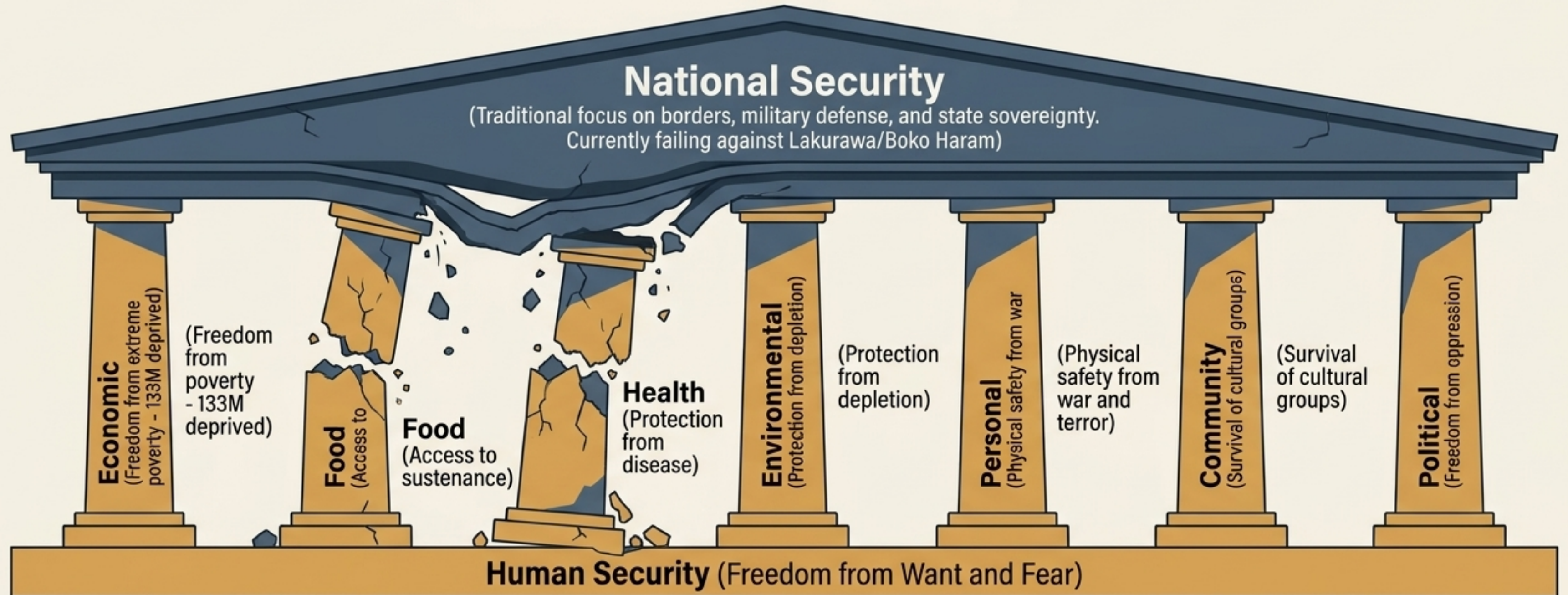
The Defensive State

- Instead of rescuing citizens, the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) went "Missing in Action."
- The state adroitly maneuvered to frame activists as "unpatriotic," falsely claiming the abductions were fictitious or politically motivated embarrassments.

The Irony: The state exerts more energy defending itself against civilian demands for human security than it does defending its territory from insurgent terror.

The Paradigm Shift: Redefining Security

National Security cannot exist without Human Security (Roland Paris, 2001).



The Thesis: When the foundational pillars of Human Security crumble, the roof of National Security inevitably collapses. A military-only solution is mathematically impossible.

International Intervention Framework

Moving beyond direct foreign military strikes toward systemic accountability.



Economic & Diplomatic Pressure (US/West)

- Implement targeted economic sanctions.
- Enforce travel restrictions on Nigerian political elites who abandon their constitutional obligations to protect affected communities.



United Nations Involvement

- Appoint a Special Rapporteur to conduct impartial, independent investigations.
- Invoke Security Council mechanisms under Chapters VI and VIII to protect populations from war crimes and crimes against humanity.



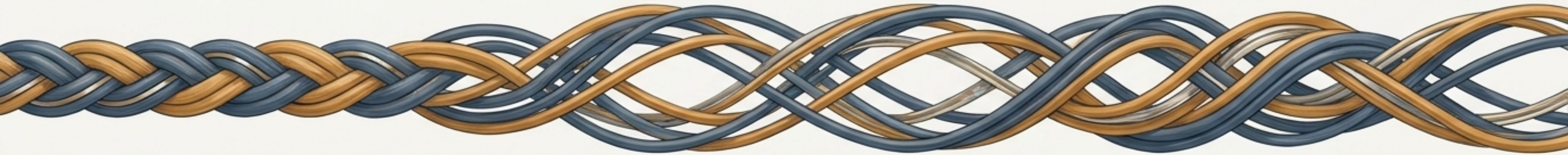
African Union Action

- Engage the AU Special Envoy on the Prevention of Genocide.
- Invoke Article 4(h) of the Constitutive Act: The right of the AU to intervene in a member state during 'grave circumstances' (genocide, war crimes).

The Constitutional Imperative

“The security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government.”

— 1999 Nigerian Constitution, Chapter II (14b)



TAKEAWAY 1

Nigeria's status as Africa's largest economy is irrelevant if it cannot defend its territorial integrity or protect its citizens from terror.

TAKEAWAY 2

The outsourcing of security to vigilantes, foreign airstrikes, or elite apathy is an absolute admission of state failure.

TAKEAWAY 3

The only viable path out of fragility is the aggressive construction of a social contract built explicitly on the foundation of comprehensive Human Security.

Final Call: The international community, NGOs, and academics must pivot from solely managing the humanitarian symptoms to demanding systemic structural accountability from the Nigerian state.