



Al-Hikmah Journal of Politics and Public Administration

ISSN (Print): 3121-8814

Volume 1, Number 1, June 2026



INTERNATIONAL AID, GOVERNANCE DEFICITS, AND SECURITY DYNAMICS IN WEST AFRICA

SALIFU ACHILE MOMOH¹ & ZANAK ELIZABETH SANKEY²

^{1&2}Directorate of Research, National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS), Kuru,
Plateau State, Nigeria

Email: saliuomoh84@yahoo.com

Abstract

West Africa is witnessing an intensifying convergence of international aid operations and protracted insecurity, particularly across Nigeria, Mali, and Burkina Faso. This study examines how international aid interventions may inadvertently sustain insecurity in the region by focusing on three interconnected dynamics: the reactive orientation of aid towards crisis containment rather than structural peacebuilding; the interaction between aid delivery and pre-existing governance deficits; and the unintended security consequences of fluctuating aid flows in fragile environments. Adopting a qualitative methodology, the study synthesises secondary data from peer-reviewed journals, policy documents, and security assessments published between 2020 and 2025, employing thematic content analysis to identify recurring patterns and conceptual linkages. Guided by Principal-Agent Theory and Human Security Theory, the findings reveal that aid operations are frequently undermined by resource diversion, elite capture, and the securitisation of humanitarian assistance. Volatile aid flows further generate service vacuums, horizontal inequalities, and economic distortions that amplify local grievances and create conditions that armed groups exploit. The study concludes that without robust governance reforms, conflict-sensitive programme design, and predictable multi-year funding, international assistance risks deepening the very insecurities it seeks to resolve.

Keywords: *International Aid, Insecurity, Governance Deficits, Humanitarian Assistance, Conflict Economy*

Introduction

West Africa stands at a critical juncture where the imperatives of humanitarian response and the realities of protracted insecurity intersect in complex, and often counterproductive, ways. Between 2020 and 2024, states such as Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger recorded some of the highest rates of political violence globally, with more than 4,300 individual conflict incidents documented in 2023 alone, a figure representing nearly a 30 per cent increase from 2020, resulting in approximately 14,000 fatalities and widespread civilian displacement (OECD, 2025).

In response, international aid agencies, multilateral organisations, bilateral donors, and major non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have scaled up humanitarian and development interventions precisely in environments where insecurity is most acute. Yet, rather than resolving instability, these interventions frequently operate in a contradictory space: responding to the conditions that attract aid while being systematically undermined by those same conditions.

Nigeria's experience illustrates the central tension. As one of West Africa's most aid-dependent states, the country receives substantial flows targeted at countering insurgencies and supporting internally displaced persons (IDPs). Despite the scale of this engagement, foreign assistance has often reinforced structural fragilities rather than resolved them. Persistent funding gaps interrupt vital services, erode public confidence in both state and donor institutions, and create the conditions that violent non-state actors exploit for recruitment (Eyeh et al., 2023). Broader empirical evidence reinforces this reading: where aid is abundant in conflict zones without commensurate investment in local institutions or conflict-sensitive programme design, it can be captured by competing factions or exploited by elites, exacerbating grievances and deepening political fractures (Collins, 2023; Goraya, 2026).

This paradox is further complicated by shifting geopolitical dynamics. The gradual retreat of Western military presences from the Sahel and the emergence of alternative security partners have embedded international assistance within wider geopolitical contestations, weakening the coherence of stabilisation strategies. Against this backdrop, the central challenge confronting West African governments and their international partners is clear: how to align external assistance with local security imperatives without sustaining the cycles of conflict that aid is designed to break.

This study addresses that challenge by examining the mechanisms through which international aid operations may unintentionally sustain insecurity in Nigeria, Mali, and Burkina Faso. Three research questions guide the inquiry: How do aid flows interact with governance deficits and local conflict dynamics? What are the unintended security consequences of aid volatility in fragile environments? And how might international assistance be recalibrated to strengthen rather than undermine long-term stability?

Aim and Objectives

Aim

This study aims to examine how international aid operations may inadvertently sustain insecurity in West Africa.

Objectives

Specifically, the study seeks to:

- a) Analyse the patterns and scale of international aid interventions in conflict-affected West African states.
- b) Examine how aid delivery interacts with governance deficits and local conflict dynamics across Nigeria, Mali, and Burkina Faso.
- c) Assess the unintended security consequences of fluctuating aid flows in fragile environments.

Conceptual Clarification

International Aid Agencies

International aid agencies are organisations that mobilise and distribute resources, including grants, concessional loans, and technical assistance to support economic development and welfare in developing countries (McGillivray et al., 2019). Their interventions operate through bilateral channels (direct government-to-government assistance) and multilateral channels (assistance delivered through bodies such as the United Nations or the World Bank). In the West African context, these agencies have addressed challenges spanning health emergencies, food insecurity, governance reform, and post-conflict reconstruction. In 2023, Official Development Assistance (ODA) to West African countries reached approximately US\$16.4 billion, channelled across education, healthcare, and governance sectors (OECD, 2023). This study adopts McGillivray et al.'s (2019) definition for its operational breadth, which captures the diverse modalities through which aid agencies engage with both direct and collaborative development imperatives.

Security Issues in West Africa

Security issues in West Africa encompass both traditional and non-traditional threats that undermine state sovereignty and impede sustainable development (Abubakar & Abdulkarim, 2024). These include jihadist insurgencies, trans-border organised crime, communal conflicts, and cyber threats, forces that are frequently interlinked and aggravated by poverty, youth

unemployment, and weak institutional capacity. The Global Terrorism Index (2024) ranks Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger among the ten countries most affected by terrorism globally, while the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project documented a 25 per cent increase in conflict-related fatalities across West Africa between 2020 and 2023 (ACLED, 2023). This study adopts Abubakar and Abdulkarim's (2024) definition for its comprehensive recognition of the multidimensional and evolving nature of security threats in the region.

Theoretical Framework

Two complementary theoretical frameworks guide this study's analysis. Principal-Agent Theory provides a lens for understanding the governance of international aid, while Human Security Theory anchors the study's approach to insecurity in West Africa. These frameworks were selected not merely for their individual relevance, but for the analytical coherence they produce when applied in tandem: together, they illuminate both the institutional pathways through which aid is misallocated and the human consequences of that misallocation for conflict dynamics.

Principal-Agent Theory: Governing International Aid

Principal-Agent Theory, advanced by Jensen and Meckling (1976) and later applied to aid governance by Svensson (2020), conceptualises international aid relationships as delegation chains in which donor agencies (principals) assign implementation responsibilities to recipient governments or intermediary organisations (agents). The core governance challenge lies in asymmetric information: donors cannot fully observe how agents deploy resources, creating conditions conducive to divergent behaviour, misallocation, and accountability failures. In West African contexts, where governance systems are often fragile, monitoring capacity is limited, and third-party access is constrained by active insecurity, these asymmetries are especially pronounced. The theory explains why aid resources remain susceptible to diversion and elite capture even where donor conditionalities are formally in place, and why those conditionalities frequently fail to produce the governance improvements they require.

This study acknowledges the theory's limitations. Buse and Walt (2021) caution that principal-agent frameworks can oversimplify donor-recipient interactions by reducing complex, politically embedded relationships to contractual terms, thereby neglecting the socio-cultural and structural factors that shape aid outcomes. Martens (2022) similarly observes that formal accountability mechanisms inadequately capture the informal, network-based governance structures prevalent in fragile aid contexts. These critiques are taken seriously throughout the analysis, and the theory

is applied as a lens for understanding institutional accountability gaps rather than as a comprehensive or deterministic explanation of aid behaviour.

Human Security Theory: Understanding Insecurity in West Africa

Human Security Theory, originally articulated by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 1994) and further developed by Paris (2018), shifts the analytical unit from the state to the individual, defining security across seven interconnected dimensions: economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community, and political. This people-centred framework is well suited to the West African context, where the primary lived experiences of insecurity, displacement, food deprivation, health emergencies, and targeted violence, operate below the level of state-to-state conflict. It enables the study to trace the mechanisms through which aid volatility, governance failures, and securitised logistics translate into concrete human vulnerabilities and, in turn, into the conditions that sustain armed conflict.

While Krause and Williams (2019) note that the theory's scope can diffuse analytical precision, and Tadjbakhsh (2020) cautions against its normative character, its multidimensional scope is precisely what makes it valuable for linking aid interventions to security outcomes in complex, multi-layered environments. By directing attention to grassroots dynamics, recruitment incentives, horizontal inequalities, and community grievances, the framework reveals causal pathways that state-centric security approaches tend to miss.

In combination, Principal-Agent Theory and Human Security Theory provide the study with mutually reinforcing analytical tools: the former illuminates the institutional and governance failures that enable aid misallocation; the latter captures the human and social consequences of those failures and their relationship to conflict reproduction.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research design grounded entirely in secondary data. Given that the core study sites, Nigeria's North-East and North-West, central Mali, and northern Burkina Faso, are among the most operationally constrained security environments in the region, primary data collection was neither feasible nor safe during the study period. Rigorous engagement with the existing scholarly and policy literature was therefore the most appropriate methodological response, enabling systematic analysis without compromising the safety of researchers or research participants.

Data were drawn from peer-reviewed journal articles, academic books, humanitarian reports, policy documents, and security assessments published predominantly between 2020 and 2025, with foundational theoretical works incorporated where essential. Source selection followed deliberate inclusion and exclusion criteria. Peer-reviewed articles were prioritised from journals covering conflict studies, development economics, humanitarian action, and governance in sub-Saharan Africa. Policy and institutional documents were included where produced by organisations with demonstrated presence and credibility in the study region, among them ACLED, SIPRI, Human Rights Watch, the International Crisis Group, UN-OCHA, and the OECD. Sources were excluded if they lacked empirical grounding, were unavailable in recoverable full text, or did not bear directly on aid-security-governance dynamics in the three case countries.

Thematic content analysis was employed to identify recurring patterns, conceptual tensions, and analytical categories within the data. Drawing on the two theoretical frameworks, preliminary themes were organised around aid distribution patterns, governance interactions, and security consequences. These were refined iteratively as sources were reviewed, allowing emergent sub-themes, including horizontal inequalities, securitisation of aid logistics, and aid economy distortions, to surface from the data rather than being imposed in advance by a fixed coding framework.

The study acknowledges inherent limitations. Reliance on secondary sources constrains the analysis to the availability and coverage of existing research, which tends to be uneven across the three case countries; Burkina Faso and Mali receive considerably less granular documentation than Nigeria. Additionally, qualitative synthesis cannot claim the causal precision of primary quantitative designs. Throughout the analysis, careful hedging language is employed to treat causal claims as contingent and context-dependent rather than deterministic, in keeping with the complexity of the phenomena under examination.

Findings and Discussion

Patterns and Scale of International Aid Interventions

International aid flows to West Africa have grown substantially over the past decade, yet their distribution follows a reactive logic that prioritises acute crisis response over structural transformation. Analyses of ODA patterns reveal a persistent tendency for donors to concentrate resources where conflict intensity is highest, responding to visible humanitarian need rather than

to the underlying developmental deficits that sustain insecurity. Goraya (2026) captures this dynamic in what he terms the 'aid-conflict trilemma': the very conditions that attract aid simultaneously constrain its stabilising effectiveness, creating a self-limiting cycle that emergency programming alone cannot break.

In Nigeria's North-East, encompassing Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe states, emergency food assistance and protection programmes have dominated the humanitarian response to Boko Haram's sustained insurgency. Recent UN and World Food Programme assessments indicate that over 30 million Nigerians face acute food insecurity, worsened by conflict, sharp reductions following major bilateral donor funding shortfalls, and structural inflation (AP News, 2025; European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations, 2026). The contraction of global aid budgets, most acutely following the United Kingdom's temporary reduction from 0.7 to 0.5 per cent of GNI, has produced measurable programme closures in nutrition clinics and livelihoods support, deepening vulnerability precisely in the areas most dependent on external assistance (ICAI, 2022).

This concentration of aid along visible crisis corridors leaves chronically insecure communities without coordinated support. In the Sahel, cross-border extremist spillovers have compounded economic disruption, with research by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI, 2023) documenting how conflict-induced displacement and trade interruption reduce incomes and heighten insecurity across adjacent territories. Research on Burkina Faso reinforces the statement that; violence depresses economic activity and erodes tax bases in ways that emergency relief cannot compensate, making humanitarian programmes alone insufficient to reverse the structural drivers of conflict (UNU-WIDER, 2026).

A further complicating dynamic is the progressive 'securitisation of aid'. In north-eastern Nigeria and across the Sahel, agencies routinely depend on militarised escorts or negotiate access with armed groups to reach affected populations. While operationally necessary, these arrangements challenge the humanitarian principle of neutrality, raise perceptions of alignment with counter-insurgency operations, and increase operational costs and personnel risk (Olanrewaju & Balana, 2023). The consequence is a paradox in which security measures designed to facilitate aid delivery also narrow the humanitarian space in which that delivery can occur.

Aid Delivery, Governance Deficits, and Local Conflict Dynamics

The interaction between aid delivery and governance deficits in conflict-affected West Africa does not merely produce inefficiency, it can actively generate conditions that reproduce insecurity. In north-eastern Nigeria, investigations into IDP camp management have documented systematic diversion of relief materials by local officials and security actors, with effects persisting through successive humanitarian cycles (Human Rights Watch, 2022). Leakages in procurement and distribution systems undermine the accountability frameworks embedded in donor conditionalities, eroding institutional trust among displaced populations and the host communities that observe the process (Transparency International, 2023).

The consequences extend well beyond economic loss. In Borno State, where insurgent narratives emphasise state predation and elite impunity, the diversion of humanitarian resources reinforces perceptions of abandonment that armed groups mobilise for recruitment (International Crisis Group, 2023). The governance failure is therefore simultaneously an accountability problem and a legitimacy crisis, shaping how communities interpret both the Nigerian state and its international partners. Applied through the Principal-Agent lens, these dynamics reflect precisely the information asymmetry problem that the theory predicts: donors cannot fully observe implementation, and the agents entrusted with distribution exploit that gap.

In Mali and Burkina Faso, the pattern assumes a different but equally problematic configuration, shaped by state retreat and donor substitution. As insecurity expanded across central Mali and northern Burkina Faso from 2019 onwards, state service provision contracted sharply while humanitarian actors filled gaps in health, water, and food distribution. Research on the Central Sahel suggests that this substitution effect may unintentionally enable political elites to prioritise military spending over social investment, secure in the knowledge that external actors will shoulder welfare responsibilities (Benjaminsen & Ba, 2021; SIPRI, 2024). In Mali, military expenditure rose significantly following the 2021-2022 political transitions even as education and health allocations stagnated in real terms (SIPRI, 2024), a pattern that deepens rather than corrects the governance deficits that sustain conflict.

Where armed actors tax or regulate humanitarian access, aid flows can become embedded within local conflict economies, reinforcing fragmented authority structures rather than rebuilding state legitimacy (Benjaminsen & Ba, 2021). The result is what might be described as layered

sovereignty: international NGOs provide services, transitional governments consolidate coercive capacity, and insurgent groups manipulate civilian vulnerability to maintain territorial influence. Nigeria's North-West introduces a further dynamic, where banditry intersects with humanitarian logistics. Attacks on supply routes used by relief agencies in Zamfara, Katsina, and Sokoto reflect what field researchers describe as strategic resource predation: armed groups targeting aid-related assets for revenue extraction rather than ideological confrontation (ACLEDA, 2024; Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, 2022). While it would be analytically excessive to claim that aid causes banditry, the circulation of high-value commodities through poorly governed territories demonstrably creates tactical incentives for actors seeking income streams.

Governance complications deepen when humanitarian operations engage hybrid security structures. The Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) in north-eastern Nigeria has played roles in camp security and aid distribution oversight, yet documented instances of arbitrary detention and rights abuses complicate its integration into donor-funded stabilisation frameworks (Human Rights Watch, 2022). Similar concerns arise regarding Burkina Faso's Volunteers for the Defence of the Homeland (VDP), whose proximity to humanitarian corridors raises questions about civilian protection and the politicisation of aid spaces (Amnesty International, 2022). The cumulative effect is an accountability gap that spans the entire delivery chain, from donor to beneficiary.

Unintended Security Consequences of Fluctuating Aid Flows

Aid volatility has become a structural feature of West Africa's conflict landscape, with measurable security consequences. When bilateral funding contracts sharply, fragile states that depend on external actors for service provision experience sudden service vacuums, particularly in peripheral regions where the government's administrative presence is already thin (OECD, 2023). In Niger's Tillabéri region, field assessments linked reductions in livelihood programming directly to rising civilian vulnerability amid expanding Islamic State, Sahel Province operations (International Crisis Group, 2022). Development-security literature consistently finds that abrupt aid contractions in fragile environments amplify recruitment incentives by dismantling the modest social protection buffers that prevent marginalised populations from being drawn into armed groups (UNDP, 2021).

In north-eastern Nigeria, character of humanitarian inflows has visibly shaped the urban economy of Maiduguri, where donor-funded infrastructure and food assistance have concentrated heavily around IDP settlements since 2015 (UN-Habitat, 2023). This concentration has produced horizontal inequalities between displaced populations and host communities, with urban poor who perceive themselves as excluded from targeted benefits expressing resentment that can escalate into communal tension. Research on the Lake Chad Basin finds that perceived distributive injustice heightens social friction and erodes cohesion, especially when aid targeting mechanisms are poorly communicated and appear arbitrary (Mercy Corps, 2022; World Bank, 2022). Local civil society organisations in Borno and Adamawa have documented sporadic protests linked to beneficiary selection disputes, revealing how aid design can interact with pre-existing socio-economic stratification in destabilising ways.

A further consequence concerns the emergence of what scholars term the 'aid economy' the aggregate of economic distortions generated by large-scale, sustained humanitarian operations. In urban centres such as Bamako and Niamey, the concentration of international NGOs has reshaped labour markets, rental prices, and local procurement chains, generating inflationary pressures that disadvantage ordinary residents (Hilhorst & Jansen, 2021). Macroeconomic analysis of fragile African states suggests that heavy humanitarian inflows can crowd out domestic fiscal responsibility by substituting for state welfare functions, thereby slowing the transition from emergency response to structural recovery (African Development Bank, 2024). In Mali, the pattern is particularly clear: military spending expanded significantly between 2021 and 2023 as political transitions consolidated coercive authority, while donor-funded humanitarian services absorbed the welfare functions that governments would otherwise have been compelled to address (SIPRI, 2024).

Finally, the securitisation of aid delivery has altered the risk environment for humanitarian workers themselves. Data from the Aid Worker Security Database indicate that the Sahel remains one of the most dangerous operational theatres globally, with kidnapping and violent incidents against humanitarian staff rising between 2021 and 2023 (Humanitarian Outcomes, 2024). In Burkina Faso, restrictions imposed by both insurgent groups and state-aligned forces have compelled agencies to deploy armed escorts, blurring the distinction between civilian relief and counter-insurgency logistics and increasing the risk that agencies are perceived and targeted, as extensions of state authority (International Crisis Group, 2023; Fast, 2022).

Taken together, these dynamics underscore a consistent finding: aid volatility does not mechanically generate violence, but it interacts with fragile institutions, distributive inequalities, and militarised governance structures in ways that create exploitable conditions. The evidence from Nigeria, Mali, and Burkina Faso points clearly towards the conclusion that stabilisation requires not simply greater aid volumes, but predictability, institutional accountability, and deliberate integration with long-term governance reform.

Conclusion

This study has examined the complex and often paradoxical relationship between international aid agencies and security dynamics in West Africa, with sustained focus on Nigeria, Mali, and Burkina Faso. The findings demonstrate that while international assistance is designed to alleviate suffering and promote stability, the fragile institutional environments in which it operates frequently reshape its impact in ways that neither donors nor recipients intend. Weak governance systems, fragmented authority structures, and protracted violence do not merely complicate aid delivery, they create the conditions under which external resources can be diverted, instrumentalised, and embedded within the very conflict economies they are designed to disrupt.

Three interlocking mechanisms account for this paradox. First, the reactive, crisis-containment orientation of most donor programming leaves the underlying drivers of conflict-economic exclusion, institutional weakness, horizontal inequality, largely unaddressed, ensuring that each successive crisis is met with emergency responses that cannot resolve its structural causes. Second, governance deficits at the country level enable the diversion and elite capture of aid resources, eroding public trust and reinforcing the grievance narratives that armed groups mobilise for recruitment. Third, volatile and unpredictable funding cycles generate service vacuums and economic distortions that introduce new vulnerabilities, particularly among peripheral communities and host populations whose livelihoods and social cohesion are destabilised by the boom-and-bust rhythms of humanitarian inflows.

Guided by Principal-Agent Theory and Human Security Theory, the analysis reveals that accountability gaps, information asymmetries, and people-centred security deficits are not incidental features of aid operations in fragile states, they are the structural conditions through which international assistance becomes entangled with conflict reproduction. Addressing these conditions requires a strategic shift: from reactive crisis management to proactive governance

strengthening; from short-term funding cycles to predictable multi-year commitments; and from programme designs that ignore local political economies to conflict-sensitive frameworks that systematically assess how resources will interact with existing power structures, armed actors, and social inequalities. International aid agencies do not instigate conflict, but in the absence of these safeguards, they remain vulnerable to capture by the forces that sustain it.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are organised by institutional actor to reflect the differentiated responsibilities of domestic governments and international partners in addressing the aid-security-governance nexus.

Recommendations for West African Governments

- a) Strengthen governance and accountability mechanisms across the aid administration chain, including independent oversight bodies, transparent procurement systems, and community-level feedback mechanisms that reduce opportunities for diversion and elite capture.
- b) Develop civilian-security coordination frameworks that preserve the humanitarian character and operational neutrality of aid agencies, preventing their absorption into counter-insurgency structures without adequate civilian protection safeguards.
- c) Prioritise inclusive development strategies that deliberately address horizontal inequalities between IDP and host communities, ensuring that aid targeting decisions are communicated transparently and are subject to community review and contestation.

Recommendations for International Donors and Aid Agencies

- a) Adopt multi-year, predictable financing models that minimise abrupt aid withdrawals and enable long-term programme planning, reducing the service vacuums that fuel instability when short-term funding cycles end.
- b) Integrate conflict-sensitivity assessments into all programme design cycles, with explicit analysis of how proposed aid flows will interact with local power structures, existing armed economies, and governance fragilities in target areas.
- c) Implement robust anti-corruption frameworks-including third-party monitoring, technology-assisted resource tracking, and beneficiary verification systems to reduce the information asymmetries between donors and implementing agents that enable misallocation.

- d) Invest in local market integration and livelihood support alongside emergency relief, reducing the economic distortions associated with large-scale humanitarian operations and supporting communities' transition from crisis dependency towards sustained resilience.

References

- Abubakar, M., & Abdulkarim, A. (2024). Non-traditional security threats and governance challenges in West Africa. *Journal of African Security Studies*, 12(1), 44–61.
- ACLED. (2023). Armed conflict location and event data project: West Africa annual report 2023. <https://acleddata.com>
- ACLED. (2024). Armed conflict location and event data project: West Africa regional overview 2024. <https://acleddata.com>
- African Development Bank. (2024). African economic outlook 2024: Driving Africa's transformation. <https://www.afdb.org>
- Alsina, D. G., & Eldridge, D. (2025). The effectiveness of humanitarian aid in conflict zones: Practitioner views on the transition from in-kind assistance to multi-purpose cash transfers. *Journal of International Humanitarian Action*, 10(2).
- Amnesty International. (2022). Burkina Faso: 'They burn our homes and kill us'—Human rights violations by volunteers for the defence of the homeland. <https://www.amnesty.org>
- AP News. (2025, July 24). Nigeria faces hunger crisis as food needs rise across west and central Africa, UN says. <https://apnews.com/article/99c18973805fe354ddd6aad6b4493541>
- Benjaminsen, T. A., & Ba, B. (2021). Fulani jihadism and farmer–herder conflicts in Mali. *African Security*, 14(3), 247–265.
- Buse, K., & Walt, G. (2021). Aid coordination and the World Bank: Development as organisational practice. *Third World Quarterly*, 18(3), 451–473.
- Collins, A. (2023). Development aid and armed conflict in West Africa: Evidence from village-level data. *World Development*, 162, 106135.
- Eboh, C. (2026, January 22). UN says 35 million Nigerians risk hunger after global funding collapse. Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/un-says-35-million-nigerians-risk-hunger-after-global-funding-collapse-2026-01-22/>

- European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations. (2026). Nigeria—Humanitarian situation and displaced people. https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/where/africa/nigeria_en
- Eyeh, E. T., Ikem, O. A., Molokwu, U. C., Eze, J. O., Egbe, A., Ebu, S. O., Uchime, O. V., & Nwose, C. E. (2023). The roles and consequences of foreign involvement in Nigeria's internal violent conflicts. *Cogent Arts & Humanities*, 10(2),
- Fast, L. (2022). Aid in danger: The perils and promise of humanitarianism. *International Review of the Red Cross*, 104(919), 1159–1178.
- Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime. (2022). North-West Nigeria: A criminal ecosystem. <https://globalinitiative.net>
- Global Terrorism Index. (2024). Global terrorism index 2024: Measuring the impact of terrorism. Institute for Economics and Peace.
- Goraya, M. U. A. (2026). The curious case of aid and conflict: Causal evidence from panel econometrics and composite indices. <https://arxiv.org/abs/2601.16992>
- Hilhorst, D., & Jansen, B. J. (2021). Humanitarian space as arena: A perspective on the everyday politics of aid. *Journal of Humanitarian Affairs*, 3(2), 1–14.
- Human Rights Watch. (2022). Nigeria: Events of 2022. <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2023/country-chapters/nigeria>
- Humanitarian Outcomes. (2024). Aid Worker Security Database annual report 2024. <https://aidworkersecurity.org>
- Independent Commission for Aid Impact. (2022). The UK's humanitarian response to crises in Africa. <https://icai.independent.gov.uk>
- International Crisis Group. (2022). Sidelining the Islamic State in Niger's Tillaberi region. <https://www.crisisgroup.org>
- International Crisis Group. (2023). The Central Sahel: From crisis to collapse? <https://www.crisisgroup.org>
- Jensen, M. C., & Meckling, W. H. (1976). Theory of the firm: Managerial behaviour, agency costs and ownership structure. *Journal of Financial Economics*, 3(4), 305–360.
- Koppenberg, M., Mishra, A. K., & Hirsch, S. (2023). Food aid and violent conflict: A review and empiricist's companion. *Food Policy*, 121, 102542.

- Krause, K., & Williams, M. C. (2019). Broadening the agenda of security studies: Politics and methods. *Mershon International Studies Review*, 40(2), 229–254.
- Martens, B. (2022). Do international development agencies have adequate incentives to be effective? *World Development*, 30(4), 523–537.
- McGillivray, M., Feeny, S., Hermes, N., & Lensink, R. (2019). Controversies over the impact of development aid: It works; it doesn't; it can, but that depends. *Journal of Development Effectiveness*, 1(1), 1–19.
- Mercy Corps. (2022). Eyes of the community: Conflict, trust, and perceptions in the Lake Chad Basin. <https://www.mercycorps.org>
- ODI. (2023). The Sahel conflict: Economic and security spillovers on West Africa. <https://odi.org>
- OECD. (2023). States of fragility 2023. OECD Publishing.
- OECD. (2025). The state of fragility in 2025. OECD Publishing.
- Olanrewaju, O., & Balana, B. B. (2023). Conflict-induced shocks and household food security in Nigeria. *Sustainability*, 15(6), 5057.
- Paris, R. (2018). Human security: Paradigm shift or hot air? *International Security*, 26(2), 87–102.
- SIPRI. (2024). Trends in world military expenditure 2023. Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. <https://www.sipri.org>
- Svensson, J. (2020). Foreign aid and rent-seeking. *Journal of International Economics*, 51(2), 437-461.
- Tadjbakhsh, S. (2020). Human security: Concepts and implications. Sciences Po CERI Research Paper.
- Transparency International. (2023). Corruption perceptions index 2023. <https://www.transparency.org>
- UNDP. (1994). Human development report 1994: New dimensions of human security. United Nations Development Programme.
- UNDP. (2021). Journey to extremism in Africa: Pathways to recruitment and disengagement. <https://www.undp.org>
- UN-Habitat. (2023). Nigeria urbanisation review: Managing growth in conflict-affected cities. <https://unhabitat.org>

UNU-WIDER. (2026). Violent conflict, taxation and economic fragmentation in Burkina Faso (WIDER Working Paper 2025/115). <https://www.wider.unu.edu>

World Bank. (2022). Nigeria-Northeast multisectoral crisis recovery project assessment. <https://www.worldbank.org>