

# Drug Abuse and Insurgency in Northeast, Nigeria: A Study of Boko Haram

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## Abstract

Drug abuse and criminality pose significant challenges to global cooperation among nations, highlighting the interconnectedness of these issues and their impacts on both developed and developing countries. This paper relies on secondary sources such as books, journal articles, and online resources accessed through libraries and the internet. Utilizing systematic search strategies, including keyword and subject heading searches across various platforms, ensures comprehensive coverage of relevant literature. The frustrated-aggression theory serves as the theoretical framework for our study titled "Drug Abuse and Insurgency in Northeast Nigeria," focusing specifically on the role of drug abuse within Boko Haram. This qualitative study explores the prevalence and consequences of drug abuse among Boko Haram insurgents in Northeast Nigeria. The escalation of violent crimes, including insurgency, in Nigeria is exacerbated by drug abuse, posing significant threats to national security and the well-being of citizens. The paper reveals a strong correlation between insurgency and drug abuse, with the drug trade flourishing in Northeast Nigeria due to the activities of insurgent groups. Recommendations include government initiatives to provide vocational training and skill development opportunities for youth, as well as proactive measures by law enforcement agencies to combat drug trafficking in the region.

**Keywords:** Boko Haram, Criminality, Drug Abuse, Insurgency, Prevalence, Security, Per Capita Income, Corruption

## 1.0 Introduction

The intertwining issues of drug abuse and criminality present significant security challenges globally, particularly impacting the socio-economic fabric of both developing and certain developed nations. According to the World Drug Report by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), illicit drug use remains a pervasive problem, with an estimated 269 million people worldwide using drugs at least once in 2020. This not only poses threats to public health but also undermines the stability and security of affected regions. Additionally, research published in the Journal of Experimental Criminology underscores the link between drug-related crimes and border

security, highlighting how trafficking networks exploit vulnerabilities in global borders. This underscores the interconnected nature of these issues, emphasizing that no country exists in isolation from the challenges posed by drug abuse and criminal activity. Opportunely, because the world responding to globalization is widening and bringing countries closer to each other, by breaking barriers and borders between nations, thereby enhancing easy access to businesses and markets from one country to the other, including the trafficking of illicit drugs and weapons by organized criminals from South America, South-west Asia, Middle East and Africa because illicit drugs trafficking have become a lucrative business having

wider market coverage among criminals (UNODC, 2023). It is not surprising that the global illicit trade involving the cultivation, manufacture, distribution and sale of substances are largely within such parts of the world particularly Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, Lao, Myanmar, Thailand, Lebanon, Mexico, Colombia, Bolivia, Colombia and Peru (O'Brien et al, 2022). While, the leading transitory access of illicit drugs in Africa are Algeria, Mali, Mauritania, Senegal, Guinea-Bissau, Libya, Guinea, Niger, Togo, Ghana, Benin and Nigeria (Mwakideu et al, 2022).

Tanko (2021) highlights Nigeria's multifaceted role in the illicit drug trade across Africa, a claim substantiated by various reports and studies. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Nigeria serves as a major transit hub for narcotics trafficking, particularly cocaine and heroin, with significant domestic production and consumption of illicit drugs. The country's strategic location, porous borders, and extensive coastline make it an attractive hub for drug traffickers seeking to smuggle narcotics into and out of Africa (UNODC, 2022). Moreover, Tanko (2021) accurately identifies the diverse array of criminal activities plaguing Nigeria's geopolitical zones, posing serious threats to national security. Nwokolo (2012) corroborate the prevalence of militancy and kidnapping in the oil-rich South-South region, fueled by socio-economic grievances and competition for resources. Similarly, the North West is grappling with escalating levels of banditry, cattle rustling, and kidnapping, as documented by both governmental and non-governmental sources. Tanko's assessment of the South East resonates with reports from Amnesty International and other human rights organizations, which have documented instances of secessionist movements like IPOB (Indigenous People of Biafra) and MOSOP (Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People), along with a surge in kidnapping incidents (Amnesty International, 2016, November 24). Additionally, Tanko accurately highlights the prevalence of kidnapping, cultism, and armed robbery in the South West, as reported by local media outlets and law enforcement agencies. Similarly, Tanko's observation regarding the North Central region aligns with findings from the Driving destruction: Cattle rustling and instability in Nigeria. (2023, January 11) and other research initiatives, which have identified identity-based

conflicts, cattle rustling, and land-related violence as key drivers of insecurity in the area.

Lastly, Tanko's assertion regarding the insurgency and kidnapping in the Northeast finds support in reports from the United Nations, the Global Terrorism Index, and various humanitarian organizations documenting the activities of insurgent groups like Boko Haram and the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), along with widespread incidents of kidnapping for ransom.

In conclusion, Tanko's analysis provides a comprehensive overview of Nigeria's involvement in the illicit drug trade and the complex security challenges facing its various regions, drawing upon a wealth of empirical evidence and expert analysis to substantiate its claims.

This paper therefore, examines and identified the prevalence and impact of drug abuse on Boko Haram insurgents in Northeast, Nigeria. Also, it investigates the extent of drug use by insurgents that add to insecurity in Northeast Nigeria, and its overall implications on youth restiveness. Information in this paper are generated through secondary sources that include existing materials such as books, journal articles, newspaper and magazine articles obtained from libraries and internet. The use of systematic strategy searches for keywords and subject headings to capture alternative spellings are relevant to the libraries, databases, archives and websites. To ensure the validity and reliability, the studies included review of literature. Likewise, the year of coverage was restricted to the period between 2009 and 2023. This period is significant because it covers the evolutionary years of Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria.

## **2.0 Conceptualizing Insurgency, Boko Haram, Terrorism, Drug Abuse, threat and National Security**

The concept of insurgency, much like other intricate phenomena, evades a singular, universally accepted definition. Scholars and institutions approach it from diverse perspectives, often emphasizing its multifaceted nature. For instance, the US Department of Defense (DoD) (2016, p.114; 2021, p. ix) characterizes insurgency as the organized use of subversion and violence to challenge political control over a region. Similarly, it's described as an organized resistance movement employing subversion, sabotage, and armed conflict to achieve

its objectives (US DoD, 2021, p.1). In essence, insurgency encompasses a spectrum of activities, from nonviolent protest to armed rebellion, all driven by political goals. However, categorizing a movement as an insurgency doesn't inherently imply a judgment on its legitimacy; rather, it denotes the nature of the conflict, which is often complex and dynamic, shaped by various factors such as historical context, socio-economic conditions, and ideological motivations (Afzal, 1991).

The emergence of Boko Haram exemplifies the evolving nature of insurgent movements. The term "Boko Haram" derives from "Boko," meaning "Western education," and "Haram," signifying "forbidden or sacrilege" in the Hausa language. Originally known as Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad, Boko Haram initially espoused nonviolent means to propagate Islamic teachings and jihad (Onuoha, 2013a, 2013b; Barna, 2014; Manu, 2016; David & Musa, 2016). However, over time, the group's tactics shifted towards violence, culminating in its designation as a terrorist organization (Walker, 2012; Onuoha, 2014; David & Musa, 2016; Cold-Ravnkilde & Plambech, 2015; Afzal, 2020).

Terrorism, a related but distinct phenomenon, defies a singular definition. It encompasses a range of tactics aimed at instilling fear and achieving political objectives through violence. Bjorgo (2005, p. 2) characterizes terrorism as a method of combat rather than an ideology, involving the deliberate targeting of non-combatants to induce fear beyond the immediate victims. This strategic use of violence distinguishes terrorism from insurgency, which typically involves broader political goals and may employ both violent and nonviolent means.

Drug abuse, a pressing societal issue, entails the deliberate misuse of substances for nonmedical purposes. The term encompasses various behaviors, including addiction, dependence, and the inappropriate use of psychoactive drugs (Sussman & Ames, 2009; Bockman et al., 2017). Unlike insurgency and terrorism, drug abuse is primarily a public health concern, although it may intersect with security issues, particularly in regions affected by conflict and instability. Similarly, the concept of threat encompasses a wide range of factors that undermine stability and security. Imobighe (2013) defines threat as anything that jeopardizes a state's ability to function normally, while Osuji (2013)

views it as an obstacle to achieving specific goals. Threats can manifest in various forms, including political instability, economic inequality, and social unrest, highlighting the interconnected nature of security challenges.

Security itself is a complex and evolving concept, encompassing not only traditional notions of state defense but also broader concerns such as human rights, economic development, and environmental sustainability. While traditional perspectives focus on protecting territorial integrity and national sovereignty, contemporary approaches recognize the importance of addressing non-traditional threats, such as climate change, cybercrime, and pandemics (Okene & Olawale, 2013; Nwolise, 2013). This expanded understanding of security underscores the need for comprehensive, holistic approaches to addressing complex security challenges in the modern world.

Therefore, the concepts of insurgency, terrorism, drug abuse, threat, and security are multifaceted and interconnected, reflecting the complex nature of contemporary security challenges. By understanding these concepts and their interrelations, policymakers and practitioners can develop more effective strategies for promoting peace, stability, and prosperity in a rapidly changing global landscape.

### 3.0 Insurgency, Terrorism, Drug Abuse, Threat and National Security: A Nexus

The nexus between drug abuse, insurgency, terrorism, threat, and national security has garnered considerable attention in academic literature (Dragani, 1998; Fernández, 1998; Revilla, 1998). Numerous studies have elucidated the intricate connections between drug abuse, trafficking, and various forms of violent crimes and conflicts (Shehu et al., 2018; Vanguard, May 26, 2021; BBC News Africa, 2018; UNODC, 2019a; CISHRWIN, 2015). Indeed, the intertwining of drugs, crime, and violence, including insurgencies and acts of terrorism, poses significant threats to national and international security (Hamm, 2005).

Countries grappling with the production, trafficking, and consumption of illicit drugs often find themselves mired in high levels of violent crime and criminality, exacerbating security challenges both domestically and globally. Examples such as Afghanistan, Myanmar, Colombia, and Nigeria illustrate how the illicit drug

trade can fuel instability and undermine state authority (Hamm, 2005). Moreover, the production, distribution, and consumption of illicit drugs are criminalized in many countries, reflecting international efforts to combat drug trafficking and organized crime (Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, 1961; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, n.d.).

Drug abuse, particularly among youth populations, is a significant contributing factor to criminal and violent activities, including involvement in insurgent movements like Boko Haram (Vanguard, May 26, 2021; BBC News Africa, 2018; UNODC, 2019a; CISHRWIN, 2015). Beyond mere consumption, Boko Haram insurgents are also implicated in illicit drug trafficking across West Africa, further blurring the lines between terrorism and organized crime (UNODC, 2019b). The convergence of terrorism and drug trafficking, often termed "narcoterrorism," has profound national and international ramifications (Boyce, 1987). Terrorist organizations and insurgent groups exploit the proceeds from the drug trade to bolster their economic, political, and military capabilities, posing formidable challenges to state security and stability (Boyce, 1987).

Overall, the interconnectedness of drug abuse, insurgency, terrorism, and threats to national security underscores the need for comprehensive and coordinated responses at both national and international levels. Efforts to combat drug trafficking, reduce drug abuse, and address the root causes of violent extremism are essential to promoting peace, stability, and security in affected regions and beyond.

#### 4.0 Theoretical Framework

The frustrated-aggression theory is adopted as the theoretical framework in our paper titled "Drug Abuse and Insurgency in Northeast Nigeria," with a specific focus on Boko Haram. Originally, the frustration-aggression theory was developed to explain animal behavior (Berkowitz, 1983; Scott, 1948), but it has since been applied to the study of human behavior by social science scholars (Breuer & Elson, 2017). Proposed by John Dollard and his associates in 1939, this theory posits that aggression is invariably preceded by frustration and that frustration invariably leads to aggression (Gilbert & Bushman, 2017). Over time, the theory underwent significant modifications, notably by Neal Miller in

1941 and Leonard Berkowitz in 1989, with the latter's version gaining prominence in modern aggression research (Psychological Bulletin, 1989). Psychologists argue that aggression is often triggered by negative emotions resulting from adverse events and accompanied by negative thoughts (Berkowitz & Heimer, 1989). Thus, it is conceivable that the insurgency perpetrated by Boko Haram and the prevalence of drug abuse in the region could be fueled by frustrations stemming from social and psychological challenges such as deprivation, poverty, and unemployment.

Applying the frustration-aggression theory to the nexus between drug abuse and insurgency in Northeast Nigeria, particularly focusing on the activities of Boko Haram, provides valuable insights into the underlying dynamics of the conflict. The frustration-aggression theory posits that when individuals or groups experience frustration or blocked goals, they are more likely to exhibit aggressive behavior as a response.

In the context of Northeast Nigeria, widespread socioeconomic challenges, limited access to education and employment opportunities, and political marginalization contribute to feelings of frustration and discontent among certain segments of the population. These frustrations create fertile ground for the recruitment and radicalization efforts of extremist groups like Boko Haram.

Moreover, the illicit drug trade exacerbates these underlying frustrations and serves as both a revenue source and a tool for recruitment for insurgent groups. Drug abuse, particularly the consumption of opioids like tramadol and codeine, not only heightens aggression and impulsivity but also fuels dependency and addiction, rendering individuals more susceptible to extremist ideologies and recruitment tactics.

Boko Haram exploits these vulnerabilities by providing a sense of purpose, belonging, and empowerment to marginalized individuals who feel disenfranchised by the government and society. By offering economic incentives and a distorted sense of identity and belonging, Boko Haram recruits and radicalizes individuals who are often already predisposed to aggressive behavior due to their frustrations and drug-induced states. Furthermore, the insurgency perpetuated by Boko Haram exacerbates the cycle of frustration and aggression, leading to further destabilization of the region and worsening socioeconomic conditions. This, in turn,

creates a feedback loop where increased frustration and insecurity fuel further aggression and violence, perpetuating the cycle of conflict and insecurity in Northeast Nigeria.

By applying the frustration-aggression theory to the context of drug abuse and insurgency in Northeast Nigeria, policymakers and stakeholders can gain a deeper understanding of the root causes of the conflict and develop more targeted interventions aimed at addressing underlying frustrations, preventing radicalization, and promoting peacebuilding and socioeconomic development in the region.

### **5.0 Assessment of Terrorist-Drugs Links: An International Dimension**

The correlation between drug trafficking and terrorism extends beyond African nations like Nigeria, reaching other regions such as South America, Southwest Asia, and the Middle East. The utilization of drugs for terrorist activities has historical precedence, notably exemplified by Colombia's 19th of April Movement (M-19), which transitioned from a guerrilla group to a political party while employing tactics like kidnapping and extortion for financial gain (Steinitz, 2002). Colombia serves as a prime example where terrorist organizations, such as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), have capitalized on the lucrative cocaine industry, engaging in narcotics production and trafficking to fund their operations (United States Department of State, 2013). Similarly, in Southwest Asia, particularly Afghanistan, the Taliban's alliance with Osama bin Laden exemplifies the intersection of terrorism and drug trade. Afghanistan's substantial opium production, facilitated by the country's economic turmoil, has fueled the global narcotics market, with drug revenues supporting terrorist activities (United States Senate, One Hundred Seventh Congress, 2002). The geographical, financial, and violent overlaps between drug trafficking and terrorism underscore the symbiotic relationship between these illicit enterprises, as evidenced by Bin Laden's reliance on Afghanistan's drug economy for sanctuary and financing (United States Senate, One Hundred Seventh Congress, 2002).

Africa, too, has become entangled in the web of terrorist-drug connections, serving as both a transit route and a production hub for illicit narcotics. West Africa, in particular, has emerged as a critical node

in international drug trafficking due to its strategic location, weak governance, and porous borders (Sevalia, 2012). The convergence of drug cartels and terrorist groups in the region is facilitated by endemic corruption, poverty, and lack of opportunities, allowing these entities to exploit disenfranchised populations for recruitment and financing (Sevalia, 2012). The surge in drug trafficking through West Africa, driven by increased demand in Europe and successful interdiction efforts elsewhere, highlights the region's vulnerability to transnational crime and terrorism (United States Senate, One Hundred Seventh Congress, 2002).

In conclusion, the nexus between drug trafficking and terrorism transcends geographical boundaries, posing significant challenges to global security. Addressing this complex issue demands concerted international efforts to dismantle criminal networks, strengthen governance structures, and alleviate socio-economic disparities in affected regions.

### **6.0 The Emergence of Boko Haram**

Boko Haram's origins are multifaceted and subject to various interpretations. Some scholars link its emergence to historical events such as pre-independence riots, civil war, and sharia debates (Akpotor & Oromarehake, 2013). Additionally, others trace it back to the Maitatsine insurgency of the 1980s (Olojo, 2013), suggesting a continuity of radical movements over time. Oral tradition suggests a familial connection, with Muhammad Yusuf's father reportedly being an active member of the Maitatsine movement (Olojo, 2013). Moreover, there are theories connecting Boko Haram to religious movements like Salafiyah and Izalah, as well as political militias formed during elections (Lawal, 2018; Onyebuchi & Chigozie, 2013). Indimi Mosque, where early activities allegedly took place, further suggests religious influences (Onyebuchi & Chigozie, 2013). The emergence of the Ahlul sunna wal jama'ah hijra or Shabaah group in 1995, initially as a Muslim Youth Organization, highlights the group's gradual evolution from non-violent to violent tactics (David & Musa, 2013; Onuoha, 2013a, 2013b).

In another perspective, the Yobe Talban group, founded in 2002, consisted of frustrated youths from diverse backgrounds, aiming to establish a modern Islamic city (Sajo, 2015). Their vision, disrupted by security interventions, points to underlying socio-

economic grievances and aspirations for an Islamic state. These factors align with views that Boko Haram originated as a socio-economic movement against corruption and economic injustice (Akpotor & Oromareghake, 2013). Such grievances, compounded by poverty and unemployment, fostered a breeding ground for radicalization and insurgency (Sahara Reporters, 2014). Additionally, political intrigues are implicated in Boko Haram's genesis, with private militias allegedly armed and used as political thugs during elections (Falana, 2014). The subsequent abandonment of these militias by politicians left them susceptible to

radical ideologies. This aligns with the findings of the Presidential Panel on the genesis of Boko Haram, which traced the group's origins to political manipulations preceding the 2003 elections (Falana, 2014).

Overall, Boko Haram's origins are complex, involving a confluence of historical, religious, socio-economic, and political factors. While specific dates and events may vary, the transition to violence intensified after Muhammad Yusuf's departure in 2009 (Nkechi, 2013), marking a crucial turning point in the group's trajectory.

### Prevalence and Impact of Drug Abuse on *Boko Haram* Insurgents in North East Nigeria

**Table 1: Prevalence of drug cases zones in Nigeria in 2018 and 2019, by zone**

Geopolitical Zones	2018	2019
1 North-East	1,608	4,490.81
2 North-Central	1,311	517,711.69
3 North-West	2,809	11,968.5
4 South-East	1,022	13,234.48
5 South-South	1,821	28,885.85
6 South-West	1,260	44,744.13
Total	9,831	621,035.46

**Source:** Statista Research Department, 2022.

In Nigeria, recent data highlights a concerning prevalence of drug abuse, with the North-West zone reporting the highest number of drug cases in 2018, totaling over 2,800 cases, while other zones collectively reported over 1,100 cases (UNODC, 2018). However, by 2019, these figures surged dramatically across all zones, with the North-Central zone alone recording over half a million cases, followed by over 44,000 cases in the South-West, and approximately 12,000 cases each in the North-West and South-East regions. Surprisingly, the North-East zone reported the fewest cases in 2019, with around 4,500 drug-related incidents. This represents an astonishing increase of over 6,000 percent compared to the previous year's figures.

The escalation of drug abuse in the North-West zone, particularly between 2018 and 2019, could be linked to the rise in violent crimes such as banditry and cattle rustling. This connection becomes apparent through the deadly activities witnessed in

states like Zamfara, Sokoto, Katsina, Kaduna, as well as parts of Jigawa, Kano, and Kebbi (Ogoh, Garba & Avong, 2023). It is argued that drug abuse significantly contributes to criminal activities like banditry and cattle rustling in these regions, mirroring the impact of Boko Haram insurgency in the northeast. Indeed, various forms of drug abuse, including opioids, ecstasy, and non-medical use of cough syrups, have become lucrative businesses for criminals, including the Boko Haram insurgent group (Alcaro, 2014; UNODC, 2022a). These proceeds often fund their terrorist activities and are used for weapons procurement, further exacerbating security challenges.

Boko Haram insurgents have been reportedly involved in drug trafficking, exploiting Nigeria's porous borders with neighboring countries to distribute substances like tramadol, codeine, and morphine (UNODC, 2022a). This engagement in the illicit drug trade, as highlighted by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC),

contributes to the proliferation of narcotics within the region (UNODC, 2022a). Numerous reports have corroborated the presence of illicit drugs and alcohol in various Boko Haram camps, emphasizing the strong connection between drug abuse and terrorist activities (Vanguard, May 26, 2021; BBC News Africa, 2018; UNODC, 2019a).

The use of psychoactive substances among insurgents, bandits, kidnappers, and other criminals has been well-documented, enabling them to carry out daring attacks and acts of violence (Vanguard, May 26, 2021; BBC News Africa, 2018; UNODC, 2019a). Government officials and security experts have also acknowledged the grave implications of drug abuse on national security. Former President Muhammadu Buhari, for example, described illicit drugs as deadlier than insurgency and other threats facing the country (Muanya et al., 2021). Similarly, the Director-General of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), General Buba Marwa, highlighted the nexus between drug abuse and various forms of insecurity, including banditry, insurgency, and kidnapping (Vanguard, May 26, 2021; Akpan, 2021).

These reports underscore the urgent need for comprehensive measures to address drug abuse and trafficking, not only within Nigeria but also across its borders. Additionally, empirical evidence suggests a strong correlation between Boko Haram activities, psychological trauma, and drug abuse among internally displaced persons (IDPs). The insurgency has displaced over a million people, many of whom have sought refuge in camps and host communities where drug abuse has become prevalent (Premium Times report, 2016; Gire & Ibaishwa, 2019; Kaiser et al., 2020; Aluh et al., 2023). Addressing these complex issues requires concerted efforts to tackle the root causes of drug abuse and provide comprehensive support to affected communities. Furthermore, the North-East region of Nigeria, comprising Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba, and Yobe states, faces significant challenges stemming from insecurity due to the activities of Boko Haram insurgents and the Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP) (Vanguard, 2021). Porous borders exacerbate the

proliferation of illicit drugs, posing a significant threat to national security.

Drug abuse is identified as a major contributor to crime and violence, especially among youths, across Africa, notably in Nigeria (Africanews, 2017; Vanguard, May 26, 2021). The connection between violent crimes, particularly Boko Haram activities, and drug abuse in the North-East region is particularly concerning. According to the UNODC (2018), approximately 78 percent of individuals injecting drugs in the North-East region are men, predominantly using pharmaceutical opioids such as tramadol, codeine, and morphine. The estimated annual prevalence of drug users in the North-East stands at 13.6 percent, with over 2 million users in the past year alone, underscoring the severity of the issue. Moreover, there are disparities in drug use trends within the North-East compared to the national average. While cannabis use is lower, the use of opioids (tramadol, codeine, morphine), ecstasy, and non-medical cough syrups exceeds national estimates. Gombe State emerges with the highest prevalence of past-year drug use at 21 percent among adults, highlighting localized challenges within the region (UNODC, 2018).

In summary, the data reveals a troubling pattern of drug abuse in the North-East zone, characterized by widespread opioid, ecstasy, and non-medical cough syrup usage. Immediate and tailored interventions are imperative to address substance abuse issues in the region and safeguard the well-being of its inhabitants.

## 8.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

In summary, this research has illuminated the intricate relationship between drug abuse and insurgency in Northeast Nigeria, with a specific focus on the activities of Boko Haram. It has become evident that drug abuse both fuels and is fueled by insurgency, exacerbating the socio-economic and security challenges in the region. Looking ahead, addressing the issue of drug abuse demands a comprehensive approach that incorporates short-term and long-term strategies. Immediate steps should include intensifying efforts to disrupt drug supply chains, enhancing law enforcement measures against drug trafficking, and

improving access to rehabilitation and treatment services for individuals grappling with substance abuse. Moreover, it is imperative to address the underlying socio-economic factors driving drug abuse, such as poverty, unemployment, and lack of education. Long-term solutions should prioritize economic development, youth empowerment initiatives, and bolstering community resilience through education and social support programs. In the context of counterinsurgency efforts, addressing drug abuse must be integrated into broader security and counterterrorism strategies. This entails dismantling the links between drug trafficking and terrorist financing, as well as implementing targeted interventions to prevent radicalization and recruitment among vulnerable populations.

Ultimately, a holistic and coordinated approach involving government agencies, civil society organizations, and international partners is crucial to effectively tackle the intertwined challenges of drug abuse and insurgency in Northeast Nigeria. Such efforts are essential for fostering sustainable peace and development in the region. Additionally, the paper recommends:

- i. Strengthening interagency collaboration to enhance coordination in combating drug trafficking and tracking illicit drugs.
- ii. Launching sensitization and awareness programs to educate the public about the grave consequences of drug abuse on national security.
- iii. Enhancing cooperation among regional countries to curb the cross-border movement of illicit drugs.



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