Article   **Open Access**

WEAK STATE INSTITUTIONS AND THE RISE OF NON-STATE ARMED ACTORS IN WEST AFRICA

Gbe Alfred Miebi

University of Portharcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria
Email: michaelokewu905@gmail.com

Abstract

The proliferation of Non-state Armed Actors (NSAs) in West Africa has become a pressing security concern, undermining state authority, governance, and socio-economic stability. This article examined the nexus between weak state institutions and the rise of NSAs, arguing that institutional fragility manifested in corruption, limited capacity, poor rule of law, and political exclusion. These factors create security vacuums that armed non-state groups exploit. Employing a qualitative, case-study approach, the study analyzes contexts in Nigeria, Mali, and Burkina Faso, highlighting diverse forms of NSAs, including jihadist insurgencies, ethnic militias, and criminal networks. The findings reveal that weak governance not only facilitates the emergence of NSAs but also sustains their operations by limiting state responsiveness and eroding citizen trust. Furthermore, socio-economic deprivation, marginalization, and historical grievances amplify susceptibility to armed mobilization. The study underscores that addressing the NSA phenomenon requires multidimensional strategies that strengthen institutional capacity, enhance rule of law, and promote inclusive governance while simultaneously addressing economic and social inequalities. Regional cooperation, particularly through ECOWAS and AU frameworks, alongside community-based peace building initiatives, is essential to mitigate the influence of NSAs. By linking theoretical perspectives on state fragility, governance, and conflict dynamics with empirical analysis, the article contributes to scholarship on security governance in fragile contexts and informs policy interventions aimed at sustainable peace in West Africa.

Keywords: Non-state Armed Actors, Security Governance, State Fragility, West Africa.

Introduction

West Africa's security landscape has undergone profound shifts in recent decades. This is done by expanding violence, fragmented governance, and the growing presence of armed non-state actors (NSAs) that increasingly challenge state authority. In the Sahel and Lake Chad regions, groups such as jihadist insurgents and armed bandits have emerged as potent security threats, operating across borders and exploiting ungoverned spaces to establish parallel systems of control (Akinyetun, 2024). The historical roots of institutional fragility in West Africa are deeply tied to colonial legacies, post-independence governance deficits, and chronic socio-economic marginalization, which have together undermined state capacity to deliver security and basic services (ACLED & GI-TOC, 2024). As a result, NSAs have not only contested states' monopoly on violence, but, in some cases, have functioned as alternative providers of order or illicit governance (Anjide & Momoh, 2025). In other words West Africa's security landscape has undergone profound transformation over the past decade, marked by escalating violence, territorial contestation, and the entrenchment of armed non-state actors (NSAs) that challenge the authority of national governments. Militant Islamist groups such as Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM) and Islamic State-linked factions have expanded their reach across the Sahel and into coastal states, conducting high-intensity operations, seizing territory, and establishing parallel governance structures, particularly in Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger. These dynamics have produced one of the most lethal security environments globally, with armed groups perpetrating attacks, displacing populations, and undermining state sovereignty. Historically, the fragility of West African state institutions has deep roots in colonial legacies, post-independence governance deficits, and uneven development that have weakened central authority and bred political exclusion. Such institutional weaknesses manifested in corruption, limited state capacity, and the erosion of the rule of law have constrained governments' ability to deliver public services and maintain security, creating ungoverned spaces that are readily exploited by NSAs. As these groups evolve from local militias to formidable security and political actors, they not only contest the state's monopoly on the legitimate use of force but also shape local political orders through coercion and informal governance

The persistence of weak institutions in West African contexts is reflected in endemic corruption, limited bureaucratic capacity, and unreliable rule of law, which weaken state legitimacy and responsiveness (Akinyetun, 2024). These governance deficits create security vacuums that NSAs exploit for recruitment, territorial expansion, and illicit economic activities, further destabilizing fragile states (ACLED & GI-TOC, 2024). The inability of states to enforce authority and protect populations has thus contributed to the entrenchment of violent actors and escalating insecurity. This study aims to: (1) analyze the structural causes of weak state institutions in West Africa; (2) examine the relationship between institutional weakness and the proliferation of NSAs; and (3) assess the socio-political and economic impacts of NSAs on affected communities. By critically linking institutional fragility with NSA proliferation, this study contributes to political science and security studies, offering insights relevant to scholars and regional policymakers seeking sustainable governance and peacebuilding strategies.

Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

Defining Key Concepts

i. **Weak State Institutions:** are central to understanding the security challenges in West Africa. These institutions are defined as governmental structures that lack the legitimacy,

administrative capacity, and organizational coherence to perform essential functions, including maintaining law and order, delivering public services, and safeguarding citizens' welfare (Rotberg, 2003; Fukuyama, 2013). Weakness in state institutions is often manifested through pervasive corruption, bureaucratic inefficiency, poor accountability, and uneven enforcement of laws across territories (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012). Indicators of institutional fragility include frequent security vacuums, inability to regulate armed groups, widespread public distrust, and ineffective judicial and administrative systems (Kahler, 2015). In West Africa, for instance, the inability of governments in Mali, Burkina Faso, and Nigeria to exert authority in rural and border regions has created a fertile environment for non-state armed actors (NSAs) to thrive (ACLED & GI-TOC, 2024).

ii. **Non-state Armed Actors (NSAs):** refer to organized groups that use violence independently of the state to pursue political, ideological, or economic objectives (Clapham, 1998; Byman, 2005). These actors vary in form and function, ranging from insurgents challenging state authority, community militias providing local protection, private security firms contracted for enforcement, to terrorist groups with transnational agendas. In West Africa, NSAs such as Boko Haram in Nigeria, JNIM in Mali, and ethno-communal militias in Burkina Faso exemplify how these actors exploit weak governance structures, porous borders, and social grievances to expand their influence and control territories (Anjide & Momoh, 2025; ACLED & GI-TOC, 2024). Beyond direct violence, NSAs often provide alternative governance or economic services, thereby embedding themselves into local political economies and challenging state legitimacy (Clapham, 1998).

iii. **State Fragility:** is an umbrella concept describing a condition where governments are unable or unwilling to perform core functions effectively (Rotberg, 2003). Fragile states typically exhibit political exclusion, weak institutional frameworks, and limited capacity to manage conflict or enforce the rule of law (World Bank, 2022). In such contexts, social grievances, poverty, and resource scarcity intersect with institutional deficiencies, creating conditions conducive to the emergence and expansion of NSAs (Fukuyama, 2013). West African states experiencing fragility often struggle with internal displacement crises, illicit economies, and cross-border insurgencies, which further undermine state authority and governance (ACLED & GI-TOC, 2024).

Theoretical Perspectives

Several theoretical lenses illuminate the nexus between weak state institutions and NSA proliferation in West Africa: State Failure Theory posits that when a state loses the capacity to enforce law, maintain order, and provide essential services, it becomes vulnerable to collapse or the emergence of parallel power structures (Rotberg, 2003). Such failure generates security vacuums exploited by NSAs, whose influence grows proportionally to the state's inability to assert authority. For example, the Sahel region's weak policing capacity and limited territorial control have allowed jihadist groups to establish semi-autonomous zones and gain local support (ACLED & GI-TOC, 2024). Security Governance and Institutionalism broadens the conceptualization of security beyond state monopoly, emphasizing interactions between formal institutions and societal actors (Buzan & Hansen, 2009). In contexts where formal governance is weak, communities often turn to NSAs for protection, creating de facto security arrangements. This theory highlights the importance of institutional quality, the rule of law, and governance mechanisms in mitigating the rise of

armed non-state groups. Resource Mobilization and Conflict Theory underscores that armed groups emerge and sustain themselves by leveraging available resources, whether human, financial, or material (Tilly, 1978; Collier & Hoeffler, 2004). In West Africa, NSAs exploit illicit economies, porous borders, and local grievances to recruit members, fund operations, and challenge state authority. The theory emphasizes the interplay between structural opportunities and strategic mobilization in understanding armed group proliferation. Neo-patrimonialism describes governance systems dominated by personalistic networks where political loyalty, patronage, and clientelism undermine formal institutions (Erdmann & Engel, 2007). In neo-patrimonial contexts, resources are diverted for personal or network benefit, bureaucracies are weakened, and state authority erodes, thereby creating environments conducive to NSA emergence (van de Walle, 2001). Many West African states exhibit neo-patrimonial characteristics, explaining persistent governance deficits despite formal institutional frameworks.

Analytical Framework

The analytical framework guiding this study links institutional capacity, governance quality, and NSA emergence. Weak institutions characterized by corruption, limited administrative reach, and political exclusion generate security vacuums that NSAs exploit (Rotberg, 2003; ACLED & GI-TOC, 2024). The framework posits a cyclical relationship: fragile governance structures enable NSAs, whose presence further undermines state authority and erodes social trust. By integrating state failure theory, security governance, resource mobilization, and neo-patrimonialism, this study provides a comprehensive lens to examine how institutional deficiencies interact with socio-political and economic conditions to facilitate NSA proliferation. This analytical approach also allows for policy-oriented insights, emphasizing that sustainable mitigation of NSAs requires strengthening state institutions, improving governance quality, and addressing underlying socio-economic grievances (Fukuyama, 2013; ACLED & GI-TOC, 2024).

Historical and Regional Context

Colonial Legacies and State Formation: The historical trajectory of West African states has profoundly shaped the contemporary security landscape, particularly the emergence of weak state institutions and non-state armed actors (NSAs). Colonial administrations imposed artificial boundaries that disregarded pre-existing ethnic, linguistic, and political configurations, thereby creating states with fragmented social cohesion and contested legitimacy (Herbst, 2000). These colonial borders often forced disparate communities into single administrative units, sowing seeds for post-independence ethnic tensions and identity-based conflicts. Colonial governance was primarily extractive, emphasizing resource exploitation and centralized control rather than building robust, inclusive institutions, a legacy that continues to constrain institutional capacity (Young, 1994; Mamdani, 1996).

Post-independence, West African states inherited weak bureaucracies and centralized authority structures ill-suited for managing diverse populations. Efforts at nation-building were often undermined by political instability, coups, and authoritarian regimes that prioritized elite interests over institutional consolidation (Adebajo, 2010). Consequently, the inability of post-colonial governments to deliver security, social services, and equitable governance created conditions conducive to the rise of NSAs, who filled institutional voids in both security and social governance.

Political and Economic Factors

Political and economic dynamics in West Africa further exacerbate institutional weaknesses. Corruption, patronage networks, and clientelism are pervasive, diverting public resources away from essential services and undermining the rule of law (van de Walle, 2001; Erdmann & Engel, 2007). Political exclusion and favoritism erode citizens' trust in the state, prompting reliance on alternative actors for protection and basic needs. Economic marginalization and high unemployment are key drivers of armed mobilization, particularly among youth populations. Poverty and lack of economic opportunities incentivize recruitment into NSAs, who often provide salaries, material incentives, or social support networks (Collier & Hoeffler, 2004). Resource competition—over land, grazing rights, minerals, or illicit economies—further fuels local conflicts, creating environments where NSAs can operate with relative impunity (Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime [GI-TOC], 2023).

Social and Cultural Factors

Ethnic cleavages and identity politics play a significant role in shaping conflict dynamics and the proliferation of NSAs. In heterogeneous societies, communal loyalties often supersede national allegiance, providing fertile ground for the formation of community-based militias, vigilante groups, and insurgent networks (Richards, 2005). These groups often emerge to protect local interests or to contest perceived marginalization by central authorities. Informal justice systems and local security arrangements are also central to understanding the rise of NSAs. In many rural and peri-urban areas, traditional leaders and customary courts offer dispute resolution mechanisms where state institutions are absent or mistrusted. While these systems can enhance local governance, they also create opportunities for NSAs to embed themselves as alternative authorities, legitimizing their presence and control (Aning & Pokoo, 2014). In combination, historical, political, economic, and socio-cultural factors interact to create environments in which weak states struggle to assert authority, thereby facilitating the emergence and entrenchment of non-state armed actors across West Africa.

Dynamics of Non-State Armed Actors in West Africa

Typologies of NSAs: Non-state armed actors (NSAs) in West Africa present diverse forms, reflecting variations in objectives, organization, and operational strategies. Terrorist organizations, such as Boko Haram in Nigeria and Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM) in Mali, pursue ideological and political objectives through violence and terror, aiming to destabilize states and establish alternative governance structures (Onuoha, 2014; ACLED & GI-TOC, 2024). These groups often operate transnationally, exploiting porous borders to evade state security forces and coordinate attacks across multiple jurisdictions. Criminal networks and trafficking groups focus primarily on illicit economic activities, including drug trafficking, arms smuggling, and human trafficking. While their primary motivation is profit, these groups contribute to regional instability by weakening governance, bribing state officials, and forging alliances with other NSAs for protection or operational advantage (Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime [GI-TOC], 2023). Community militias and vigilante groups typically emerge in response to state incapacity or perceived threats to local security. These actors provide protection to communities or specific ethnic groups and often operate outside formal legal frameworks. While they may reduce immediate insecurity at the local level, they can exacerbate intercommunal tensions and occasionally evolve into more organized armed factions (Aning & Pokoo, 2014).

Drivers of NSA Emergence

The proliferation of NSAs in West Africa is driven by multiple interrelated factors. Security vacuums and weak law enforcement remain primary catalysts. States with limited territorial reach, poorly equipped security forces, and ineffective judicial systems fail to deter or contain armed groups, allowing NSAs to establish strongholds in rural and border areas (Rotberg, 2003; ACLED & GI-TOC, 2024). Socio-economic deprivation also contributes significantly. High levels of poverty, unemployment, and lack of social services create incentives for youth to join NSAs, who offer material benefits, social networks, or a sense of purpose (Collier & Hoeffler, 2004). Additionally, economic marginalization exacerbates grievances that armed actors exploit to recruit members and legitimize their operations. Political exclusion and grievances further fuel armed mobilization. When communities perceive systemic discrimination, ethnic marginalization, or exclusion from political processes, NSAs present themselves as alternative authorities or champions of local interests, thereby gaining social legitimacy (Adebajo, 2010). In contexts of weak governance, these groups often blend political, social, and economic strategies to sustain operations and influence.

Synopsis of NSA operation in West Africa

i. **Nigeria**: Boko Haram, active since 2002, initially emerged as an Islamist insurgent group seeking to implement Sharia law in northern Nigeria. Over time, it evolved into a transnational terrorist network, exploiting governance gaps, socio-economic deprivation, and local grievances to expand operations across the Lake Chad Basin (Onuoha, 2014). Concurrently, Fulani militias have engaged in violent clashes over land and grazing rights, reflecting both ethno-communal tensions and the state's inability to manage resource conflicts (International Crisis Group [ICG], 2022).

ii. **Mali**: The Tuareg insurgencies and jihadist groups such as JNIM in northern Mali illustrate the fusion of ethnic grievances with Islamist ideology. Weak state presence in the Sahel, coupled with underdevelopment and porous borders, allowed these groups to establish operational strongholds and influence local governance structures (Thurston, 2020).

iii. **Other Regional Examples**: In Côte d'Ivoire, post-election violence and community militias have periodically destabilized political transitions. Burkina Faso has witnessed the rapid rise of Islamist insurgents exploiting fragile state institutions, while Guinea-Bissau experiences organized crime networks and armed factions that manipulate political instability for economic gain (ACLED & GI-TOC, 2024; GI-TOC, 2023). These cases demonstrate that the rise of NSAs is not limited to a single country or conflict type; rather, it reflects broader regional dynamics shaped by weak institutions, socio-economic deprivation, and historical grievances. Understanding these patterns is critical for designing policy interventions aimed at mitigating armed violence and enhancing governance capacity.

Impact of Non-State Armed Actors

Security Implications: Non-state armed actors (NSAs) significantly exacerbate insecurity in West Africa by directly contributing to violence and instability. Groups such as Boko Haram, JNIM, and Fulani militias have carried out attacks on civilians, security forces, and infrastructure, resulting in widespread fear and disruption (Onuoha, 2014; Thurston, 2020). The escalation of violence often occurs in cycles, where state counterinsurgency measures

trigger retaliatory attacks, leading to prolonged conflict and humanitarian suffering (ACLED & GI-TOC, 2024). Beyond domestic insecurity, NSAs pose threats to regional peace and cross-border security. The transnational operations of groups in the Sahel and Lake Chad Basin demonstrate how porous borders and weak regional coordination allow armed actors to evade capture, recruit across states, and smuggle weapons and resources (ICG, 2022). Consequently, instability in one state frequently spills over into neighboring countries, complicating regional security governance and coordination efforts by bodies such as ECOWAS and the African Union (Aning & Pokoo, 2014).

Political Implications

The proliferation of NSAs undermines state legitimacy and authority, as citizens increasingly perceive the state as incapable of ensuring their safety or delivering essential services (Rotberg, 2003). In regions dominated by armed groups, communities often rely on NSAs for security and conflict mediation, effectively transferring authority from state institutions to non-state actors (Fukuyama, 2013). Additionally, NSAs contribute to the weakening of democratic governance and state-society relations. Their presence disrupts electoral processes, constrains political participation, and pressures governments to prioritize security expenditures over development programs, which further alienates populations (Adebajo, 2010). In some cases, NSAs engage in political coercion or intimidation, manipulating local power structures and exacerbating governance deficits (ICG, 2022).

Socio-Economic Implications

NSAs profoundly affect civilian populations through displacement and humanitarian crises. Violence and insecurity force large-scale population movements, with internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees often settling in informal camps with limited access to food, healthcare, and education (GI-TOC, 2023). These conditions heighten vulnerability to disease, malnutrition, and further socio-economic marginalization.

Moreover, NSAs disrupt economic activities and livelihoods. Agricultural production, trade, and local markets are frequently targeted or abandoned due to insecurity, reducing household incomes and exacerbating poverty (Collier & Hoeffler, 2004). Infrastructure destruction, extortion, and illicit taxation by armed groups further erode local economies, creating cycles of economic deprivation that reinforce dependency on NSAs for survival or protection (ACLED & GI-TOC, 2024). Taken together, these security, political, and socio-economic consequences illustrate the profound destabilizing effects of NSAs in West Africa and underscore the importance of integrated state-building, governance reform, and regional cooperation in mitigating their impact.

Policy Responses and Institutional Strengthening

State-Centered Approaches: Strengthening state institutions is a primary avenue for mitigating the threat posed by non-state armed actors (NSAs) in West Africa. Security sector reform (SSR) and capacity-building initiatives aim to professionalize police, military, and intelligence services, enhancing their ability to respond effectively to insurgency, terrorism, and organized crime (Sedra, 2010). SSR emphasizes accountability, operational efficiency, and civilian oversight, thereby reducing abuse and corruption that often fuel local grievances. Complementing SSR, improvements in rule of law, anti-corruption measures, and governance structures are crucial. Transparent judicial systems, effective law enforcement, and consistent enforcement of property and contract rights reinforce state legitimacy,

reducing the incentives for citizens to rely on NSAs for protection or dispute resolution (Rotberg, 2003; Fukuyama, 2013). Anti-corruption frameworks, public financial management reforms, and merit-based bureaucratic systems are vital for curbing patrimonialism and enhancing institutional credibility (Erdmann & Engel, 2007).

Regional and International Initiatives

Given the transnational nature of many NSAs, regional cooperation is indispensable. ECOWAS and the African Union (AU) have played critical roles in conflict prevention, peacekeeping, and joint security operations. Initiatives such as the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) in the Lake Chad Basin exemplify coordinated responses to Boko Haram and other insurgent groups, enhancing intelligence sharing, cross-border patrols, and operational synchronization (ICG, 2022). International partners also support counterterrorism, capacity-building, and humanitarian interventions. Collaborative frameworks integrate military, legal, and development-oriented responses to simultaneously address immediate threats and long-term structural vulnerabilities (Aning & Pokoo, 2014). These efforts emphasize the importance of regional burden-sharing and multilateral engagement to contain NSAs and stabilize fragile states.

Community-Based Strategies

Local communities are both affected by and key actors in the response to NSAs. Community-based peacebuilding and militia integration programs aim to formalize and regulate local security initiatives, reducing the risk of abuse while strengthening local governance capacity (Richards, 2005). Examples include incorporating vigilante groups into official security frameworks or training local defense committees under civilian oversight. Addressing root socio-economic grievances is equally critical. Poverty, unemployment, and social exclusion are significant drivers of recruitment into NSAs. Development programs focusing on education, livelihoods, and access to essential services reduce the structural conditions that NSAs exploit (Collier & Hoeffler, 2004; GI-TOC, 2023). Combining security interventions with social and economic initiatives ensures that responses are not merely reactive but also preventive.

Recommendations

A holistic strategy is essential for sustainable mitigation of NSAs, integrating security, governance, and development dimensions. Policies should promote accountability, transparency, and citizen engagement, reinforcing state legitimacy and trust while constraining the operational space of armed groups (Fukuyama, 2013; Rotberg, 2003). Long-term solutions require harmonized efforts across national, regional, and local levels, ensuring that governance reforms, security sector improvements, and socio-economic interventions mutually reinforce one another. By addressing both structural weaknesses and immediate security threats, West African states can better contain NSAs and foster resilient, stable communities.

Conclusion

The proliferation of non-state armed actors (NSAs) in West Africa is both a symptom and a cause of weak state institutions, demonstrating the intricate relationship between governance deficits, socio-economic vulnerabilities, and regional instability. This study has highlighted that weak state institutions characterized by corruption, inadequate administrative capacity, limited enforcement of the rule of law, and neo-patrimonial

governance create security vacuums that NSAs exploit to expand their influence. By providing protection, alternative governance, and economic opportunities in the absence of effective state presence, NSAs have entrenched themselves as formidable actors in the West African security landscape (Rotberg, 2003; Fukuyama, 2013; ACLED & GI-TOC, 2024). Historically, colonial legacies, artificial boundaries, and post-independence institutional weaknesses have shaped state fragility, which, compounded by political exclusion, socio-economic deprivation, and ethnic cleavages, has enabled the rise of terrorist organizations, criminal networks, and community militias. The cases of Boko Haram and Fulani militias in Nigeria, JNIM and Tuareg groups in Mali, and insurgencies in Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire illustrate how NSAs exploit local grievances, weak governance, and transnational networks to sustain operations (Onuoha, 2014; Thurston, 2020; ICG, 2022).

The impacts of NSAs are multi-dimensional, encompassing heightened insecurity, erosion of state legitimacy, disruption of democratic governance, displacement, humanitarian crises, and economic destabilization. These consequences underscore the necessity for integrated responses that address both immediate security threats and the structural conditions that facilitate NSA proliferation. Policy responses must combine state-centered approaches, including security sector reform, rule-of-law improvements, and anti-corruption measures, with regional initiatives led by ECOWAS, the African Union, and international partners. Furthermore, community-based strategies that integrate local militias into formal security frameworks and address underlying socio-economic grievances are essential for sustainable peace (Aning & Pokoo, 2014; Richards, 2005; GI-TOC, 2023). Recommendations emerging from this study emphasize a holistic and multi-level approach: strengthening institutional capacity, enhancing transparency and accountability, promoting citizen engagement, and integrating socio-economic development with security interventions. Only by addressing the structural drivers of fragility alongside immediate security concerns can West African states hope to reduce the influence of NSAs and foster resilient, stable societies. Finally, this study contributes to scholarship in political science, security studies, and governance by linking theoretical perspectives on state fragility, neo-patrimonialism, and resource mobilization with empirical evidence from West Africa. It also provides a framework for policymakers to design interventions that are both context-sensitive and sustainable. By advancing both theoretical understanding and practical policy insights, this study underscores that sustainable peace in West Africa requires coordinated efforts across local, national, and regional levels, addressing not only the symptoms but also the root causes of armed mobilization and institutional weakness.

References

ACLED & GI-TOC. (2024). *Non-state armed groups and illicit economies in West Africa*. ACLED.

Adebajo, A. (2010). *The curse of Berlin: Africa after the Cold War*. Hurst & Company.

Aning, K., & Pokoo, J. (2014). Non-state actors and local security governance inWest Africa. *African Security Review, 23*(1), 4–22. https://doi.org/10.1080/10246029.2014.891241

Acemoglu, D., & Robinson, J. A. (2012). *Why nations fail: The origins of power, prosperity, and poverty*. Crown Business.

Anjide, S., & Momoh, S. A. (2025). State and non-state actors and community security: The emergence of the Lakurawa violent group in Nigeria. *University of Jos Journal of Political Science, 2*(2), 1–13.

Byman, D. (2005). *Deadly connections: States that sponsor terrorism*. Cambridge University Press.

Buzan, B., & Hansen, L. (2009). *The evolution of international security studies*. Cambridge University Press.

Clapham, C. (1998). *African guerrillas*. Indiana University Press.

Collier, P., & Hoeffler, A. (2004). Greed and grievance in civil war. *Oxford Economic Papers, 56*(4), 563–595. https://doi.org/10.1093/oep/gpf064

Erdmann, G., & Engel, U. (2024). Neopatrimonialism revisited—beyond a catch-all concept. *GIGA Working Papers, No. 33.*

Fukuyama, F. (2023). *Political order and political decay: From the industrial revolution to the globalization of democracy*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime (GI-TOC). (2023). *Organized crime in West Africa: Trends and challenges*. GI-TOC Publications.

Herbst, J. (2000). *States and power in Africa: Comparative lessons in authority and control*. Princeton University Press.

International Crisis Group (ICG). (2022). *The Lake Chad Basin crisis: Boko Haram and the regional response* (Report No. 304). ICG.

Kahler, M. (2015). *Governance and state capability in developing countries*. Princeton University Press.

Mamdani, M. (1996). *Citizen and subject: Contemporary Africa and the legacy of late colonialism*. Princeton University Press.

Onuoha, F. C. (2014). Boko Haram and the evolving Salafi Jihadist threat in Nigeria. *Combating Terrorism Center, CTC Sentinel, 7*(9), 7–12.

Richards, P. (2005). *No peace, no war: An anthropology of contemporary armed conflicts*. Ohio University Press.

Rotberg, R. I. (2003). *State failure and state weakness in a time of terror*. Brookings Institution Press.

Sedra, M. (2010). *Security sector reform in challenging environments*. Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF).

Thurston, A. (2020). *Jihadists of North Africa and the Sahel: Local politics and rebel groups*. Cambridge University Press.

Tilly, C. (1978). *From mobilization to revolution*. McGraw-Hill.

van de Walle, N. (2001). *African economies and the politics of permanent crisis, 1979–1999*. Cambridge University Press.

World Bank. (2022). *World development report: Fragility, conflict, and violence*. World Bank Publications.

Young, C. (1994). *The African colonial state in comparative perspective*. Yale University Press.