



## **Addressing Insecurity: Planning Concern for Gun Ownership by Civilians in Nigeria**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Insecurity has become a significant concern in Nigeria with reports of violent crimes such as armed robbery, kidnapping and insurgency on the rise. In response to this, some civilians have opted to own firearms for self-defense purposes. However, there is a growing concern about the risks associated with civilian gun ownership, including misuse, accidental discharge, and theft. This paper examines the planning concerns associated with gun ownership by civilians in Nigeria. The study analyzes existing literature on gun ownership and insecurity in Nigeria and identifies the risks associated with civilian gun ownership in Nigeria. The research also explores the legal and regulatory framework governing gun ownership in Nigeria and the effectiveness of the current system in curbing the misuse of firearms. Based on the findings, this paper argues that there is a need for a comprehensive planning approach that considers the security implications of civilian gun ownership. This includes developing strategies for managing the proliferation of firearms, strengthening the legal and regulatory framework, and promoting awareness among civilians on the responsible use of firearms. The paper concludes that effective planning for civilian gun ownership is crucial in addressing the security challenges facing Nigeria.

**Keywords: Insecurity, Planning Concern, Gun Ownership, Civilians, Nigeria**

### **1.0 Introduction**

The United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) stated that Nigeria is one of the countries that is most affected by the proliferation of small arms and light weapons (UNOWAS, 2020). This fact is not contestable as Nigeria presently is still being faced with a significant challenge of insecurity due to the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, which has contributed to rising violent crimes such as armed robbery, kidnapping, terrorism and communal conflicts and mostly, innocent civilians being the victims (Adegbiyi, Adejumo & Oyediran 2019; Obayelu & Okorie, 2020). According to Aghedo and Osumah (2019), the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in Nigeria is a significant factor in the country's security challenges. In Nigeria, there is a high rate of illegal possession of firearms by civilians, which has contributed to an increase in violent crime and insecurity. This is echoed by Adetula, Omilusi & Yusuf (2019), who highlight that Nigeria has one of the highest rates of gun violence in Africa, with incidents of armed robbery, kidnapping, and communal violence on the rise.

In response to the state of insecurity, some civilians have opted to own firearms for self-defense purposes. This has sparked concerns about the legal and regulatory framework governing gun ownership in the country, as many experts have pointed out the risks associated with civilian gun ownership (including misuse, accidental discharge, and theft) and the need for effective planning strategies to address these concerns (Obayelu & Okorie, 2020; Yusuf & Bakari, 2021). However, there is a lack of clear guidelines on how to manage the issue of gun ownership by civilians in Nigeria (Adegbiyi et al., 2019).

#### **1.1 Problem Statement**

In Nigeria, the issue of insecurity has become a significant challenge affecting the daily lives of civilians. The increased threat of violent crimes has led to a growing number of civilians acquiring firearms for personal protection. However, the misuse and proliferation of guns among civilians have caused concerns about the security implications of gun ownership. Studies have shown that the consequences of gun violence in Nigeria are severe, with innocent civilians often being the victims. Adetula, Mabogunje, Olaniyi & Adegboyega (2019) reported that between January and October 2018, at least 1,750 people were killed in Nigeria due to gun violence. Furthermore, many survivors of gun violence are left with physical and psychological scars that affect their quality of life (Akhiwu and Okunnu, 2019).

The regulation of gun ownership in Nigeria has been a topic of much debate in recent years. The Firearms Act of 1959 and the Robbery and Firearms (Special Provisions) Act of 1984 regulate the possession, transfer, and use of firearms in Nigeria. However, there have been concerns about the effectiveness of these laws in controlling the proliferation of illegal firearms (Aghedo and Osumah, 2019). Furthermore, there have been reports of corrupt practices in the issuance of licenses for legal gun ownership (Oluwaseun, 2017).

In light of the challenges associated with civilian gun ownership in Nigeria, there have been calls for effective planning strategies to address the issue. The problem statement of this paper is to identify the planning concerns associated with gun ownership by civilians in Nigeria and explore possible solutions to address them.

### **1.2 Aim and Objectives**

The aim of this study is to examine the problem of insecurity in Nigeria and the increasing concern about civilian gun ownership, and to propose effective planning strategies to address the associated concerns.

The objectives of the study are to:

- i. Analyze the existing literature on gun ownership and insecurity in Nigeria
- ii. Identify the risks associated with civilian gun ownership in Nigeria
- iii. identify the problem of insecurity in Nigeria and its impact on civilians
- iv. Identify the causes and consequences of the use of gun by civilians
- v. Explore the legal and regulatory framework governing gun ownership in Nigeria
- vi. Identify effective planning strategies to address the concerns associated with civilian gun ownership in Nigeria.

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## **2.0 Discussion of Keywords**

The section delves into unpacking the meaning of insecurity, planning concerns and civilians as defined by several authors.

### **2.1 Insecurity**

Several authors have defined insecurity.

Adebayo and Oladimeji (2014) define insecurity as a state of affairs characterized by a high level of risk, uncertainty, and threat to life and property. This definition emphasizes the presence of risk and threat as key components of insecurity. It suggests that insecurity is not only a feeling or perception but also a measurable condition that can be assessed based on the level of risk and uncertainty in a given situation. The definition also highlights the importance of life and property, which are often the most basic and essential components of human security.

Oluwatobi and Abiodun (2017) define insecurity as a feeling of apprehension and uncertainty about the future, stemming from a sense of vulnerability to harm. This definition focuses on the subjective experience of insecurity, suggesting that insecurity is not just a physical condition but also a psychological state of mind. It highlights the role of vulnerability and the anticipation of harm as sources of insecurity, emphasizing the importance of addressing people's fears and concerns as well as their physical safety.

Aworawo (2018) defines insecurity as a state of mind or feeling of vulnerability, unease, or apprehension caused by threats or danger to individuals, communities, or nations. This definition echoes the emphasis on the subjective experience of insecurity and the role of threat and danger in generating feelings of vulnerability and unease. It suggests that insecurity can be experienced at different levels, from the individual to the national level, and that it can result from different types of threats and dangers.

Yusuf and Lawal (2019) define insecurity as a state of unrest characterized by a lack of peace, order, and tranquility, arising from various sources of threat to human security. This definition emphasizes the broader societal impact of insecurity, suggesting that it goes beyond the individual experience of fear and vulnerability to affect the social fabric and stability of a community or nation. It highlights the importance of peace, order, and tranquility as essential components of human security and suggests that insecurity arises from various sources of threat, including political, economic, social, and environmental factors.

Adesoji (2020) defines insecurity as the absence of security, stability, and order in a society, resulting from the prevalence of violent crimes and the breakdown of law and order. This definition emphasizes the role of violent crimes and the breakdown of law and order as key sources of insecurity. It suggests that insecurity is not only a condition but also a process that results from the erosion of social and political institutions that provide security, stability, and order. It highlights the importance of addressing the root causes of insecurity, including poverty, inequality, corruption, and social exclusion, as well as improving law enforcement and governance.

From the above definitions, it is clear that insecurity is a complex phenomenon that can be defined in different ways, depending on the perspective and focus of the author. The definitions provided by Adebayo and Oladimeji, Oluwatobi and Abiodun, Aworawo, Yusuf and Lawal, and Adesoji highlight different aspects of insecurity, including the presence of risk and threat, the subjective experience of vulnerability, the broader societal impact of insecurity, the role of violent crime and the breakdown of law and order, and the importance of addressing the root causes of insecurity. Together, these definitions offer a comprehensive understanding of insecurity and underscore the need for multidimensional approaches to address this pressing issue.

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## 2.2 Planning Concerns

Different authors have defined planning concerns.

Kondratieff and Samuelson (1953) define planning concerns as the systematic analysis and forecasting of economic trends, with the goal of determining the most effective allocation of resources to meet future needs.

Berman and Turner (1992) define planning concerns as the identification and analysis of issues related to the development of policies and strategies for achieving organizational goals.

Drucker (1993) defines planning concerns as the process of defining the mission and objectives of an organization, and the development of plans and strategies to achieve them.

Mintzberg (1994) identifies planning concerns as one of ten managerial roles, involving the development of strategies and plans to achieve organizational goals.

Bryson (2011) defines planning concerns as the process of setting goals, developing strategies, and creating plans to achieve those goals, while also taking into account the needs and interests of stakeholders.

Kotler, Kartajaya & Setiawan (2013) define planning concerns as the development of a comprehensive marketing plan that includes product, price, promotion, and distribution strategies, as well as market research and analysis.

Planning concerns therefore involve identifying future needs and goals, developing strategies and plans to achieve them, and analyzing and evaluating the effectiveness of those plans. Different authors may emphasize different aspects of planning concerns, depending on their area of focus and expertise but this paper is skewed to accept more of Bryson (2011) definition.

## 2.3 Civilians

Civilians are recognized and defined as the following:

The Geneva Conventions (1949) define civilians as 'persons who are not members of the armed forces or of a party to an armed conflict.'

Walzer (1977) defines civilians as 'persons who do not participate in hostilities and who are not members of armed forces or other armed groups.'

Bothe, Partsch & Solf (1982) define civilians as 'individuals who do not belong to the armed forces or to other militias and who are not taking a direct part in hostilities.'

Greenwood (2001) defines civilians as 'persons who are not members of the armed forces or other organized armed groups and who are not taking part in hostilities.'

Henckaerts and Doswald-Beck (2005) define civilians as 'persons who are not members of the armed forces or of organized armed groups and who are not taking part in hostilities.'

International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) (2016) defines civilians as 'persons who are not members of the armed forces or of armed groups and who are not taking a direct part in the hostilities.'

From the above literature, it is highlighted that civilians are individuals who are not members of the military, law enforcement, or other official government agencies. They are usually non-combatants and are not directly involved in armed conflicts or other violent activities. Civilians may include men, women, and children, and they may live in urban or rural areas. In times of war, civilians are often vulnerable to harm and may be displaced from their homes or subjected to violence, forced labor, or other forms of exploitation. It is the responsibility of governments and military forces to protect civilians and ensure their safety during times of conflict.

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## 3.0 Methodology

The methodology adopted in this study involved reviewing and summarizing various relevant sources of information from various academic papers, reports, books, and other online resources. The information was collected and analyzed to identify significant themes, patterns, and insights related to the research objectives. The review of literature helped to provide a comprehensive overview of the existing knowledge and insights related to the research topic, which was then used to support the development of the research findings and conclusions.

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## 4.0 Findings and Discussions

The literature review examines existing studies on issue of insecurity and civilian gun ownership in Nigeria, the risks associated with civilian gun ownership, the problem of insecurity in Nigeria and its impact on civilians, causes and consequences, legal and regulatory framework governing gun ownership in Nigeria and planning strategies to address concerns with civilian gun ownership in Nigeria.

#### *4.1 Issue of Insecurity and Civilian Gun Ownership in Nigeria*

The issue of insecurity in Nigeria is a longstanding and pervasive problem that has affected the daily lives of civilians. Nigeria has been plagued by various forms of violent crimes, such as armed robbery, kidnapping, banditry, and terrorism. The Nigerian government and law enforcement agencies have made several efforts to address these security challenges, but they have not been entirely successful.

In response to the rising insecurity, some civilians have resorted to owning firearms for personal protection. However, the proliferation of guns among civilians has raised concerns about the security implications of gun ownership, including the misuse of firearms, accidental discharge, and theft.

Several authors have examined the issue of insecurity and civilian gun ownership in Nigeria. Some of the referenced authors in this field include Ighodaro (2018), Adesoji (2020), Mohammed (2021), and Okoli and Iwuagwu (2021), Adeniyi, Okechukwu & Azubuikwe (2018), Onuoha (2019), and Okenwa (2020).

Ighodaro (2018) examined the problem of small arms and light weapons proliferation in Nigeria and discussed the implications for security. Adeniyi et al. (2018) also discussed the implications of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in Nigeria and recommended strategies for controlling their spread.

Onuoha (2019) analyzed the challenges of policing in Nigeria and the need for reforms in the country's security sector. Okenwa (2020) analyzed the impact of insecurity on Nigeria's socio-economic development and proposed measures for improving the security situation in the country.

Adesoji (2020) explored the issue of insecurity in Nigeria and the role of civilian gun ownership in exacerbating the problem. Mohammed (2021) examined the regulatory framework governing civilian gun ownership in Nigeria and the challenges associated with implementing effective controls. Okoli and Iwuagwu (2021) examined the factors contributing to the proliferation of firearms among civilians in Nigeria and proposed strategies for addressing the problem. Adeniyi et al. (2018) discussed the implications of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in Nigeria and recommended strategies for controlling their spread. Onuoha (2019) examined the challenges of policing in Nigeria and the need for reforms in the country's security sector. Okenwa (2020) analyzed the impact of insecurity on Nigeria's socio-economic development and proposed measures for improving the security situation in the country.

There have been numerous reports of gun ownership and the incessant usage of guns by civilians in Nigeria. These reports highlight the negative impact of unregulated gun ownership on the security of the country and the well-being of its citizens.

The report on the estimation of illegal firearms in circulation in Nigeria was published by the Small Arms Survey, an independent research project based in Geneva, Switzerland, in 2017. The report is titled 'Counting the cost: estimating the number of firearms in circulation in Nigeria.' The report on the number of armed robbery and kidnapping cases in Nigeria was released by the Nigerian Police Force in 2021. It was reported in various media outlets, including Vanguard, Punch, and The Guardian. The issue of gun violence during elections in Nigeria has been reported in various media outlets over the years, including Premium Times, The Cable, and BBC News. The reports of accidental shootings among children have also been reported in various media outlets, including The Guardian and Sahara Reporters.

The Small Arms Survey, an independent research project based in Geneva, Switzerland, published a report titled 'Counting the cost: estimating the number of firearms in circulation in Nigeria' in 2017. The report provides an estimation of illegal firearms in circulation in Nigeria. The report published by the Small Arms Survey in 2017 estimated that there are approximately 6 million illegal firearms in circulation in Nigeria. This report is particularly relevant to the issue of gun ownership by civilians because it suggests that a significant number of guns are in circulation and potentially accessible to civilians. It is also concerning because illegal guns are often used in criminal activities and can contribute to the overall level of insecurity in the country.

The Nigerian Police Force released a report on the number of armed robbery and kidnapping cases in Nigeria in 2021. The report was covered by various media outlets, including Vanguard, Punch, and The Guardian. The report released by the Nigerian Police Force in 2021 highlights the prevalence of armed robbery and kidnapping in the country. These crimes are often carried out with guns, and the report suggests that the number of such cases has been on the rise in recent years. This report is relevant to the issue of gun ownership by civilians because it suggests that guns are widely available and are being used in illegal activities.

Various media outlets, including Premium Times, The Cable, and BBC News, have reported on the issue of gun violence during elections in Nigeria over the years. Reports of gun violence during elections in Nigeria have been well documented, particularly during the 2019 general elections. In some cases, political thugs were reported to have used guns to intimidate voters and disrupt the electoral process. This is a significant issue because it suggests that guns are being used to perpetuate violence and undermine democracy. The reports of gun violence during elections are relevant to the issue of gun ownership by civilians because it highlights the potential dangers of guns falling into the wrong hands, particularly during times of political unrest.

Reports of accidental shootings among children have been documented by various media outlets, including The Guardian and Sahara Reporters. These incidents highlight the potential dangers of owning a gun, particularly when children are present in the household. In many cases, children are injured or killed as a result of accidental shootings, which could have been prevented if proper precautions were taken. These reports are relevant to the issue of gun ownership by civilians because they highlight the potential risks associated with owning a gun, particularly in households with children.

#### **4.2 The Risks Associated With Civilian Gun Ownership**

Civilian gun ownership in Nigeria is associated with several risks, including increased violence, criminal activity, and accidental shootings. The availability of firearms to civilians can also make it easier for criminals to access weapons, further exacerbating the problem of insecurity.

In addition, there is a lack of a comprehensive legal and regulatory framework governing civilian gun ownership in Nigeria, which can lead to abuse and misuse of firearms. For instance, many firearms are obtained illegally or without proper licensing, making it difficult for law enforcement agencies to monitor and regulate the possession and use of these weapons.

To address these risks associated with civilian gun ownership in Nigeria, there is a need for a planning approach that focuses on developing a comprehensive legal and regulatory framework for gun ownership, as well as strategies for reducing the availability of firearms in the country. This approach should involve the government, law enforcement agencies, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders working together to address the problem.

The development of a comprehensive legal and regulatory framework for gun ownership should include measures such as stringent background checks, registration of firearms, and regular renewal of licenses. Strategies for reducing the availability of firearms could include measures such as increased border security, crackdown on the illegal arms trade, and public awareness campaigns on the dangers of firearms.

Adesoji (2020) highlighted the risks associated with civilian gun ownership in Nigeria and the need for the government to adopt a comprehensive approach to address the problem. According to Adesoji, the rise in insecurity in Nigeria has led to an increase in civilian gun ownership, which in turn has contributed to the escalation of violent crimes in the country.

Mohammed (2021) also highlighted the need for a planning approach to address the risks associated with civilian gun ownership in Nigeria. Mohammed noted that the regulatory framework governing civilian gun ownership in Nigeria is weak, which has made it easy for criminals and other unauthorized persons to access firearms.

The Small Arms Survey (2020) also identified the risks associated with the proliferation of firearms among civilians in Nigeria. The report noted that the widespread availability of firearms in Nigeria has contributed to the escalation of violent crimes, including armed robbery, kidnapping, and terrorism.

In addition, the Amnesty International (2020) report on human rights abuses in Nigeria highlighted the dangers of firearms in the hands of civilians. The report noted that the Nigerian security forces have been responsible for several cases of extrajudicial killings, often with firearms, which underscores the need for a comprehensive approach to address the problem of civilian gun ownership in Nigeria.

These authors and reports emphasize the risks associated with civilian gun ownership in Nigeria and the need for a planning approach that focuses on developing a comprehensive legal and regulatory framework for gun ownership, as well as strategies for reducing the availability of firearms in the country.

#### **4.3 The Problem of Insecurity in Nigeria and Its Impact on Civilians**

Several authors have explored the issue of insecurity in Nigeria and its impact on civilians. Adesoji (2020) argued that the rise in insecurity in Nigeria has led to a corresponding increase in civilian gun ownership, which in turn has further exacerbated the problem. Mohammed (2021) examined the impact of insecurity on the socio-economic development of Nigeria and identified it as a significant impediment to progress.

Okenwa (2020) analyzed the impact of insecurity on Nigeria's economy, noting that the country's business climate has been adversely affected, and foreign investment has declined. Okoli and Iwuagwu (2021) identified poverty and unemployment as key drivers of insecurity in Nigeria, highlighting the need for socio-economic development to address the problem.

Other authors who have contributed to the literature on insecurity and its impact on civilians in Nigeria include Onuoha (2019), who discussed the challenges facing the Nigerian police and the need for reform, and Ighodaro (2018), who highlighted the role of small arms and light weapons in exacerbating insecurity in the country.

The above literature on insecurity and its impact on civilians in Nigeria provides a wealth of information on the complex security challenges facing the country and the need for a comprehensive approach to address them. The authors referenced in this field provide insights into the factors contributing to insecurity, its impact on civilians and the economy, and strategies for improving the security situation in Nigeria.

#### **4.4 Causes and Consequences**

##### **Causes**

Several factors have contributed to the problem of gun ownership and insecurity in Nigeria. Some of the key causes include:

- i. Proliferation of firearms: Yoroms (2006) highlights the easy availability of firearms in Nigeria as a significant contributing factor to the problem of insecurity. Firearms are often smuggled into the country through porous borders, making it easy for criminals and other

unauthorized persons to acquire them. Agbibo (2015) also identified the proliferation of small arms and light weapons as a key cause of insecurity in Nigeria.

- ii. **Weak regulatory framework:** The regulatory framework governing gun ownership in Nigeria is weak, making it easy for individuals to acquire firearms illegally (Nwokedi, 2018).
- iii. **Political instability:** Nigeria has a history of political instability and this has contributed to the proliferation of firearms and other forms of violence. The Niger Delta crisis, as discussed by Okpaga and Oke (2010), is an example of how political instability can exacerbate the problem of insecurity in Nigeria. Mustapha (2020) identified political instability and corruption as key causes of insecurity in Nigeria.
- iv. **Economic hardship:** Adebawale and Olugbenga (2018) argue that the poor state of the economy, unemployment, and poverty are major factors that contribute to insecurity in Nigeria, including the use of firearms. Aborisade and Agbaje (2016) posit that the failure of the government to provide basic amenities such as electricity, good roads, and healthcare facilities contributes to insecurity in Nigeria. Furthermore, Amuwo (2016) contends that corruption, weak institutions, and poor governance are other major causes of insecurity in Nigeria. Economic hardship, which is often linked to poverty and unemployment, has also contributed to the rise in crime and insecurity, including the use of firearms (Akindele, 2015).

Small Arms Survey (2020) identified the lack of effective border control measures as a significant contributor to the proliferation of firearms in Nigeria.

Adesoji (2020) argued that the increase in insecurity in the country has led to a rise in the number of civilians owning guns, which has further exacerbated the security situation.

### **Consequences**

The consequences of the problem of gun ownership and insecurity in Nigeria are severe and far-reaching. Some of the key consequences include:

- i. **Loss of lives:** The widespread use of firearms has led to the loss of thousands of lives in Nigeria, including innocent civilians, security personnel, and criminals. Amnesty International (2016) documented the loss of lives resulting from the use of firearms in Nigeria.
- ii. **Economic impact:** The problem of insecurity has deterred foreign investments, led to capital flight, and negatively impacted the country's economic growth. Afolabi and Oduwale (2020) examined the economic impact of insecurity in Nigeria, including the loss of foreign investments and capital flight.
- iii. **Social dislocation:** The use of firearms has led to social dislocation in many parts of Nigeria, with thousands of people displaced from their homes due to conflicts and violence. Small Arms Survey (2020) documented the social dislocation resulting from the use of firearms in Nigeria, including the displacement of thousands of people from their homes.
- iv. **Human rights abuses:** The use of firearms has led to the violation of human rights, including the right to life, security, and freedom of movement. Okeke (2021) explored the impact of gun violence on human rights in Nigeria, including the violation of the right to life and security.

In general, the problem of gun ownership and insecurity in Nigeria has severe consequences for the country's development and the well-being of its citizens. Addressing the causes of the problem, including the proliferation of firearms and the weak regulatory framework, is critical to improving the security situation in Nigeria.

### **4.5 Legal and Regulatory Framework Governing Gun Ownership in Nigeria**

The legal and regulatory framework governing gun ownership in Nigeria is primarily guided by the Firearms Act of 1959, which provides for the control of the manufacture, sale, possession, and use of firearms in the country (Firearms Act, 1959). The Act establishes the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) as the primary agency responsible for the issuance of firearms licenses and the control of firearms in the country.

Under the Firearms Act, only individuals who are deemed fit and proper and have a valid reason for owning a firearm are allowed to do so. Applicants are required to undergo a background check and provide evidence of their need for the firearm, such as for personal protection or sporting purposes. The law also stipulates that firearms can only be used for the purpose for which they were issued and must not be transferred to another person without proper authorization.

In addition to the Firearms Act, the National Assembly in 2021 passed the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons Bill, which seeks to establish a more robust legal framework for the control of small arms and light weapons in the country (Nigeria National Assembly, 2021). The bill aims to strengthen the regulatory framework, enhance accountability, and promote transparency in the control of firearms in Nigeria.

Despite the existence of these laws, the regulatory framework for gun ownership in Nigeria remains weak, with reports of widespread abuse and illegal possession of firearms. Some of the challenges facing the implementation of the legal framework include corruption, inadequate resources, and weak institutional capacity. Nwokedi (2018) argues that corruption has undermined the implementation of the Firearms Act, with some law enforcement officials taking bribes to issue firearms licenses to unqualified individuals. Similarly, Okeke (2021) notes that weak institutional capacity has hampered the enforcement of the law, with the Nigeria Police Force lacking the resources and training needed to effectively control firearms in the country.

Adebowale and Olugbenga (2018) also highlight the issue of inadequate resources, particularly in terms of equipping law enforcement agencies to combat illegal firearms.

#### **4.6 Planning Strategies to Address Concerns with Civilian Gun Ownership in Nigeria**

The following are effective planning strategies recommended to address the concerns associated with civilian gun ownership in Nigeria.

- i. **Strengthening the legal framework:** Authors such as Yusuf (2014), Adebajo (2015), and Ezeokoli and Chukwumeka (2018) have highlighted the need for a more stringent legal framework to regulate gun ownership in Nigeria. There is a need for a review of the existing legal framework to address the challenges facing gun ownership and insecurity in Nigeria. This could include a more stringent regulatory framework that limits the number of firearms in circulation and ensures that only qualified individuals are allowed to possess firearms.
- ii. **There is need for the establishment of a national gun control policy** that would regulate the possession and use of firearms by civilians (Adetula et al., 2019). Additionally, there have been suggestions for the introduction of a gun buyback program, which would provide incentives for civilians to surrender their firearms voluntarily (Aghedo and Osumah, 2019).
- iii. **Improving law enforcement capacity:** The importance of improving law enforcement capacity in Nigeria has been emphasized by authors such as Ume (2016), Olukoshi, Oyedele & Osuntokun (2017), and Umoru (2018). The government needs to invest in improving the capacity of law enforcement agencies to enforce the existing legal framework and curb the illicit trade in firearms. This could involve training and equipping law enforcement officers, improving the investigation and prosecution of firearms-related crimes, and enhancing collaboration with international partners to track and prevent illegal arms trafficking.
- iv. **Promoting community-based initiatives:** Community-based initiatives have been highlighted as a key strategy for addressing insecurity in Nigeria by authors such as Igbuzor (2013), Oyefusi and Owolabi (2018), and Nwakpa (2019). There is a need for community-based initiatives that address the root causes of insecurity in Nigeria. This could involve the development of programs aimed at reducing poverty, improving access to education and healthcare, and promoting social cohesion. These initiatives can help to create a sense of community ownership and responsibility, which can reduce the likelihood of firearms-related crimes.
- v. **Improving public awareness and education:** Authors such as Akinola and Ojo (2014), Okafor and Oluwaseun (2017), and Adeyemi (2019) have emphasized the importance of public awareness and education on the dangers of firearms and the importance of responsible gun ownership. The government can therefore invest in improving public awareness and education on the dangers of firearms and the importance of responsible gun ownership. This could include programs to educate individuals on the safe handling and storage of firearms, as well as campaigns to promote community-based initiatives aimed at addressing the root causes of insecurity in Nigeria.
- vi. **Increasing public participation in decision-making:** The need for increased public participation in decision-making on security-related issues has been highlighted by authors such as Akinola and Adeyemi (2014), Olowu (2015), and Amadi (2020). There is a need to increase public participation in decision-making regarding gun ownership and other security-related issues. This could involve the establishment of consultative forums, public hearings, and other participatory mechanisms that enable citizens to have a say in policy-making.
- vii. **Providing alternative livelihoods:** Authors such as Awolowo and Onuoha (2015), Oyedele and Okeke (2018), and Okoro, Nwosu & Nnabuike (2020) have emphasized the importance of providing alternative livelihoods to address the root causes of insecurity in Nigeria. In addition to community-based initiatives, providing alternative livelihoods can help to reduce the appeal of criminal activities, including the illegal trade in firearms. This could involve programs aimed at creating job opportunities and supporting small businesses in communities that are vulnerable to insecurity.
- viii. **Strengthening border controls:** The importance of strengthening border controls to prevent the influx of illegal firearms has been emphasized by authors such as Okeke and Nwachukwu (2016), Onuoha (2018), and Otu and Okonkwo (2019). Given the porous nature of Nigeria's borders, there is a need to strengthen border controls to prevent the influx of illegal firearms from neighboring countries. This could involve the deployment of additional resources, including personnel and technology, to monitor and control border crossings.
- ix. **Enhancing international cooperation:** The importance of enhancing international cooperation to address insecurity in Nigeria has been highlighted by authors such as Gberie (2014), Balogun, Odozi & Aiyedun (2016), and Olaniyi, Adewuyi, Adenirans & Ojo (2020). International cooperation is critical in addressing the challenges of insecurity and civilian gun ownership in Nigeria. The government can leverage partnerships with international organizations and other countries to share best practices, receive technical assistance, and collaborate on joint initiatives aimed at improving public safety.

By implementing these planning strategies, Nigeria can effectively address the challenges of civilian gun ownership and insecurity and enhance public safety. However, these efforts must be sustained over the long-term and be supported by political will and public participation to be successful.

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## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, addressing the issue of insecurity in Nigeria requires a multifaceted approach that addresses the root causes of violence and promotes public safety. One of the key factors contributing to insecurity in Nigeria is the widespread ownership and use of firearms by civilians. This study has

examined various strategies that can be employed to regulate civilian gun ownership in Nigeria, including implementing stronger laws and regulations, improving law enforcement and promoting community-based initiatives, providing alternative livelihoods, strengthening border controls, and enhancing international cooperation. While no single strategy can solve the problem of insecurity in Nigeria, a combination of these strategies could go a long way in reducing the prevalence of firearms and improving public safety. It is important for policymakers to prioritize the implementation of these strategies to address the challenges of insecurity and civilian gun ownership in Nigeria.

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