



An examination of the roles of private security organizations in crime prevention in Abuja, Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Nigeria.

By

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Abstract

The growing demand for private security organizations (PSOs) in Nigeria stems from rising crime rates, rapid urbanization, and the limited capacity of public policing institutions to provide adequate security coverage. This trend is particularly pronounced in Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), where the concentration of national institutions, diplomatic missions, and economic infrastructure has intensified reliance on private security services. Despite their expanding presence, concerns persist regarding the effectiveness, regulation, and operational capacity of PSOs in urban crime prevention. This study therefore examines the roles and challenges of private security organizations in crime prevention within Abuja, guided by two research objectives: (i) to examine the roles of private security organizations in crime prevention, and (ii) to identify the challenges affecting their effectiveness. Anchored in Routine Activity Theory (RAT), which posits that crime occurs when a motivated offender, a suitable target, and the absence of a capable guardian converge, the study adopts a qualitative research design based on secondary data drawn from academic journals, government reports, and institutional publications. Findings reveal that private security organizations perform critical crime prevention functions including access control, surveillance, patrol operations, crowd management, and intelligence gathering, thereby acting as capable guardians that disrupt crime opportunities across residential estates, commercial hubs, and government facilities. However, their effectiveness is constrained by inadequate training, poor remuneration, proliferation of unlicensed operators, and weak collaboration with public law enforcement agencies. These challenges undermine the quality of guardianship and fragment the broader security network. The study concludes that while private security organizations significantly complement public policing in Abuja, their full potential remains unrealized without robust regulatory oversight, investment in professional development, and structured public-private security partnerships. Recommendations include mandatory training programs for security personnel and stricter enforcement of licensing standards by the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) to enhance accountability and operational effectiveness within the private security industry.

Keywords: Crime Prevention, Private Security Organizations, Routine Activity Theory, Public-Private Security Partnership

Introduction

The issue of crime prevention has become a major concern across the world as urbanization, population growth, economic inequality, and technological changes have increased the complexity of modern security challenges. In many countries, governments alone can no longer adequately meet the growing demand for security services, which has led to the rapid expansion of private security organizations. Globally, private security organizations have emerged as important actors in crime prevention by complementing the work of public law enforcement agencies through surveillance, patrol services, access control, intelligence gathering, and protection of lives and property. The rise of private security institutions is closely associated with the increasing privatization of security and the shift from traditional state-centered policing to multi-actor

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security governance involving both public and private stakeholders. Contemporary studies show that private security personnel now outnumber public police officers in several countries, particularly in developed economies where businesses, residential estates, and corporate institutions rely heavily on contract security services to safeguard assets and maintain order (Chauke, 2025).

The global security environment has also been shaped by emerging threats such as terrorism, cybercrime, organized crime, and urban violence, which require collaborative security responses involving both government and private sector actors. Research has shown that effective crime prevention strategies increasingly rely on integrated security networks in which private security companies provide technological surveillance systems, alarm monitoring, risk assessments, and emergency response services to supplement public policing efforts. Furthermore, technological innovations such as artificial intelligence, smart surveillance systems, and integrated communication platforms have enhanced the operational capacity of private security firms, enabling them to play more proactive roles in threat detection and crime deterrence in urban environments. The growing complexity of security threats and the limitations of public policing resources therefore make private security organizations indispensable components of contemporary security architecture. Consequently, scholars and policy makers have increasingly emphasized the importance of public-private partnerships in security governance as a critical strategy for improving crime prevention outcomes and strengthening community safety in modern societies (Cascavilla et al., 2023; Oyebambi, 2024).

In Africa, the expansion of private security organizations has been strongly influenced by rapid urbanization, rising crime rates, weak policing capacity, and the need for improved protection of commercial and residential infrastructures. Many African countries have experienced significant growth in the private security sector over the past two decades as businesses, financial institutions, government facilities, and residential estates increasingly rely on private guards and security technologies to protect their premises. The African security landscape is characterized by complex security challenges including armed robbery, terrorism, kidnapping, communal conflicts, and organized crime, which have placed enormous pressure on public security institutions. As a result, private security firms have become critical actors in crime prevention and public safety across several African cities. In countries such as South Africa, Kenya, and Ghana, private security companies provide a wide range of services including armed response, alarm monitoring, access control, and mobile patrol operations that complement the activities of police and other law enforcement agencies. (Ike et al., 2025)

The reliance on private security services in many African states has been attributed to limited police personnel, inadequate security infrastructure, and the increasing demand for specialized protection services by private corporations and high-value institutions. In some countries, the number of private security

personnel has grown significantly, sometimes exceeding the number of formal police officers, reflecting the growing privatization of security governance in the region (Bruce, 2023). However, despite their growing importance, the operations of private security organizations in Africa are often constrained by regulatory challenges, inadequate training, poor coordination with law enforcement agencies, and limited professional standards. Scholars have therefore emphasized the need for stronger regulatory frameworks and improved collaboration between public security institutions and private security companies to ensure that private security operations contribute effectively to crime prevention and community safety across the continent. Strengthening oversight mechanisms, improving training standards, and enhancing information sharing between public and private security actors are considered essential for maximizing the effectiveness of private security organizations in addressing Africa's evolving security challenges (Cascavilla et al., 2023).

In Nigeria, the growing demand for private security services has been largely driven by the persistent challenges of crime, terrorism, banditry, kidnapping, and other forms of insecurity affecting different parts of the country. Over the past two decades, Nigeria has witnessed a significant expansion of private security organizations as individuals, businesses, financial institutions, and government establishments increasingly seek additional security protection beyond what public security agencies can provide. The Nigerian security architecture traditionally relies on institutions such as the Nigeria Police Force, the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, and the armed forces to maintain internal security; however, the increasing complexity of security threats has necessitated the involvement of private actors in crime prevention efforts. Private security organizations in Nigeria operate under the regulatory oversight of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), which is responsible for licensing and supervising private guard companies in accordance with the Private Guard Companies Act. These organizations provide various security services including guarding, surveillance, access control, alarm monitoring, and escort services to businesses, banks, hotels, residential estates, and government institutions (Owonikoko & Alumona, 2025).

Studies have shown that private security organizations play an important role in crime deterrence by maintaining visible security presence, monitoring suspicious activities, and supporting law enforcement agencies through intelligence sharing and incident reporting. In many urban centers across Nigeria, private security guards are often the first line of defense against criminal activities in residential neighborhoods and commercial establishments. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of private security organizations in Nigeria is often constrained by challenges such as inadequate training, poor remuneration, lack of modern security equipment, and weak coordination with formal law enforcement agencies. In addition, the rapid proliferation of private guard companies has raised concerns about regulatory compliance, operational standards, and the professionalization of the industry. Despite these challenges, scholars have argued that integrating private

security organizations into Nigeria's broader security framework can significantly enhance crime prevention efforts and improve public safety if supported by adequate regulatory oversight, training, and collaboration with public security institutions (Chinwokwu, 2021; Hassan et al., 2022).

Within the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, the role of private security organizations has become increasingly significant due to the city's rapid population growth, economic expansion, and concentration of government institutions, diplomatic missions, corporate headquarters, and high-value infrastructures. Abuja serves as the political and administrative capital of Nigeria and hosts numerous national and international institutions, which makes it a strategic urban center requiring a high level of security management. As the city continues to experience rapid urbanization and population influx, the demand for effective security services has increased significantly. Private security organizations have therefore become prominent actors in safeguarding residential estates, commercial complexes, banks, hotels, shopping malls, and government facilities across the territory. These organizations provide essential security functions such as access control, perimeter surveillance, patrol services, crowd control, and emergency response, thereby complementing the activities of public security agencies (Owonikoko & Alumona, 2025)

In Abuja, the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps continues to regulate private guard companies and ensure that only licensed operators provide security services within the territory, reflecting the government's recognition of the importance of private security actors in maintaining public safety. Recent developments have also shown increasing collaboration between private security firms and government security agencies in addressing emerging security threats within the capital city. Empirical studies conducted in parts of Abuja have indicated that private security organizations contribute significantly to urban crime prevention by deterring criminal activities, providing rapid response to security incidents, and enhancing the overall sense of safety among residents and businesses. However, challenges such as inadequate training, limited operational resources, poor coordination with law enforcement agencies, and regulatory compliance issues continue to affect the optimal performance of private security organizations within the city. These challenges highlight the need for improved policy frameworks, capacity building, and stronger public-private security partnerships to enhance the effectiveness of private security organizations in crime prevention. Given the increasing reliance on private security services in Abuja and the strategic importance of the city to Nigeria's national security and economic stability, examining the roles of private security organizations in crime prevention within the Federal Capital Territory is essential for understanding their contributions, limitations, and potential for strengthening urban security governance in Nigeria (Akinmoladun, 2021; Adeleke, 2022; Jibril, 2022).

Statement of Problem

In Nigeria, rising crime rates, rapid urbanization, and the limited capacity of public policing institutions have driven an increasing reliance on private security organizations to protect lives and property across residential, commercial, and government spaces. Despite their growing prominence, the effectiveness of these organizations in crime prevention is constrained by multiple operational challenges, including inadequate personnel training, poor remuneration, lack of modern equipment, and weak regulatory compliance. A particularly critical concern is the proliferation of unlicensed private security companies, which the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) has repeatedly identified as a threat to professional standards and accountability. This challenge is especially pronounced in Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), where the concentration of national institutions, diplomatic missions, and economic infrastructure has intensified demand for private security services.

Yet, recent enforcement operations by the NSCDC revealed that several private guard companies in Abuja operated without proper licensing, exposing significant gaps in regulation and oversight (Oyinsan, 2025). Compounding these regulatory deficiencies is the weak collaboration between private security organizations and formal law enforcement agencies, characterized by mistrust, bureaucratic barriers, and the absence of clear operational frameworks that would facilitate intelligence sharing and coordinated crime prevention efforts (Nwagu & Mathias, 2024). Consequently, despite the pervasive reliance on private security in Abuja, there remains a limited empirical understanding of their actual roles, operational effectiveness, and the specific challenges that hinder their contribution to urban crime prevention. This study therefore addresses this gap by systematically examining the roles and challenges of private security organizations in crime prevention within the Federal Capital Territory, with the aim of informing policy, regulatory reform, and strategies for enhancing public-private security collaboration

Research Questions

This study provides answers to the following research questions

- i. What roles do private security organizations play in crime prevention in Abuja?
- ii. What challenges affect the effectiveness of private security organizations in crime prevention in Abuja?

Research Objectives

The main objective of this study interrogates roles of private security organizations in crime prevention in Abuja, Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Nigeria. While specific Objectives

- i. Examine the roles of private security organizations in crime prevention in Abuja.

- ii. Identify challenges affecting the effectiveness of private security organizations in crime prevention in Abuja.

Literature Review

Conceptual Clarification

Private Security Organizations

Private Security Organizations (PSOs) refer to non-governmental institutions or companies that provide security and protective services to individuals, businesses, and sometimes government agencies on a contractual basis. The concept of private security emerged from the increasing demand for safety and protection beyond the capacity of public law-enforcement agencies such as the police and military. Globally, the role of PSOs has expanded significantly due to rising crime rates, urbanization, and the need for specialized security services in both public and private sectors. According to recent international security literature, private security organizations are business entities that provide a wide range of security services, including guarding, surveillance, access control, risk assessment, and protection of lives and property for clients who require security support (Danmusa, 2025).

These organizations operate independently of government law-enforcement agencies but often complement public security structures by assisting in crime prevention, intelligence gathering, and protection of critical infrastructure. In many countries, PSOs form part of what scholars describe as “plural policing,” where both state and non-state actors collaborate to maintain safety and social order. From an international perspective, private security companies are generally defined as organizations primarily engaged in providing guard and patrol services such as bodyguard services, security guards, alarm monitoring, and the prevention of unauthorized access or criminal activity against people or property (GRIN Security Studies, 2024). Their activities may also include traffic control, fire and theft prevention, investigation services, and the protection of valuable assets in corporate or residential environments. These services are typically delivered by trained security personnel who operate under specific regulatory frameworks established by national laws or licensing authorities. In the Nigerian context, private security organizations are increasingly recognized as important actors in supporting national security efforts, especially as the country faces challenges such as terrorism, kidnapping, armed robbery, and vandalism of critical infrastructure. The Nigerian government acknowledges that private security companies can complement the work of conventional security agencies by providing surveillance, intelligence support, and protection for businesses, institutions, and residential areas (Federal Ministry of Interior, 2025).

The activities of these organizations in Nigeria are regulated under the Private Guard Companies Act, which outlines the licensing, supervision, and operational guidelines for private security firms operating in the country. Conceptually, therefore, PSOs can be understood as privately owned institutions that employ trained personnel and modern technologies to deliver security services aimed at protecting people, property, and information against threats or criminal activities. They differ from public security agencies in that they are profit-oriented and operate through contractual relationships with clients, but they share a common objective of maintaining safety and preventing crime within society. In contemporary security governance, the growing reliance on PSOs reflects the evolving nature of security provision, where governments increasingly collaborate with private actors to strengthen crime prevention and enhance overall public safety. Consequently, private security organizations have become an essential component of modern security management systems worldwide, filling critical gaps in protection services while supporting the broader framework of national and community security (Musa, 2026).

Crime Prevention

Crime prevention refers to the proactive strategies, policies, and actions designed to reduce the likelihood of criminal activities occurring and to minimize their harmful consequences on individuals, communities, and society at large. The concept emphasizes preventing crime before it occurs rather than responding only after offences have been committed. Crime prevention involves a range of measures aimed at addressing the root causes of crime and reducing opportunities for criminal behavior. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, crime prevention comprises strategies and measures that seek to reduce the risk of crimes occurring and their potential harmful effects on individuals and society, including fear of crime, by intervening to influence their multiple causes (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime [UNODC], 2024). This definition highlights that crime prevention focuses on tackling the underlying social, economic, and environmental factors that contribute to criminal behavior such as poverty, unemployment, inequality, and weak community institutions.

Contemporary criminological perspectives further emphasize that crime prevention is a collective responsibility involving governments, law enforcement agencies, private security organizations, civil society, and community members who must collaborate to create safer environments. Internationally, crime prevention strategies commonly include situational crime prevention, social or developmental prevention, and community-based prevention, all of which aim to reduce opportunities for crime and strengthen protective social structures. In the Nigerian context, crime prevention has increasingly become a key component of national security policy due to growing concerns over urban crime, cybercrime, terrorism, and organized criminal activities. Security agencies and policymakers now emphasize preventive mechanisms

such as intelligence gathering, community policing, improved surveillance technologies, public awareness programmes, and stronger collaboration with private security organizations to reduce criminal incidents before they occur. These approaches recognize that effective crime prevention goes beyond traditional policing and involves broader social development efforts, improved governance structures, environmental design, and technological innovations aimed at enhancing public safety and reducing victimization in society (National Crime Prevention Council of Nigeria, 2025).

Private Public Security Partnership

Private Public Security Partnership (PPSP), often referred to as a public–private security partnership, is a collaborative arrangement in which government security agencies and private sector actors work together to prevent crime, manage security risks, and enhance public safety through the sharing of resources, expertise, intelligence, and operational responsibilities. The concept developed from the understanding that contemporary security threats such as terrorism, cybercrime, organized crime, and urban violence are increasingly complex and cannot be effectively addressed by government institutions alone; therefore, cooperation with private organizations that control critical infrastructure, advanced technologies, and security services has become essential. In this context, a public–private partnership generally refers to a long-term cooperative arrangement between public institutions and private entities in which both parties share responsibilities, risks, and resources in delivering services or achieving specific policy objectives (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2022).

Within the security sector, such partnerships enable law-enforcement agencies to benefit from the technological capacity, specialized knowledge, and operational support of private security firms, financial institutions, telecommunications companies, and other stakeholders. International security frameworks emphasize that collaboration between law-enforcement agencies and private organizations facilitates information sharing, intelligence analysis, capacity building, and coordinated responses to emerging security threats (Interpol, 2023). From a broader perspective, public–private security partnerships are therefore defined as institutionalized cooperation between governmental authorities and private sector actors aimed at preventing crime, improving security governance, and strengthening societal resilience against threats. In the Nigerian context, the concept reflects collaborative security initiatives in which government authorities partner with private companies, industries, and community stakeholders to support policing activities, provide logistics and surveillance infrastructure, and enhance the operational effectiveness of security agencies in addressing evolving threats. Consequently, private–public security partnership represents an integrated security governance framework in which public institutions and private actors jointly contribute

to maintaining order, preventing crime, protecting critical assets, and promoting sustainable safety within society.

Urban Security Management

Urban security management refers to the coordinated policies, institutions, and operational strategies designed to protect people, infrastructure, and social activities within urban environments from threats such as crime, violence, disasters, terrorism, and emerging technological risks. The concept has gained prominence as rapid urbanization and population growth have increased the complexity of safety challenges in modern cities. In general terms, urban security management involves the systematic planning, coordination, and implementation of preventive and responsive measures by government authorities, security agencies, local communities, and private stakeholders to ensure a safe and resilient urban environment. According to the United Nations, urban safety and security can be understood as a public good that emerges from the interaction between risk factors and protective mechanisms within a city, emphasizing the protection of individuals' physical, social, and psychological well-being while enabling citizens to participate fully in economic and social life (United Nations, 2024).

This perspective highlights the multidimensional nature of urban security, which extends beyond traditional law enforcement to include urban planning, social inclusion, environmental protection, and disaster risk management. Similarly, recent urban security studies describe urban security management as a set of coordinated actions undertaken by city authorities and stakeholders to enhance the capacity of urban systems to identify, prevent, and respond to threats that may undermine public safety and quality of life. These actions include crime prevention strategies, emergency preparedness, surveillance systems, community participation, and integrated governance mechanisms aimed at improving situational awareness and response capabilities in cities (Zlomislić, 2025). Therefore, urban security management represents a comprehensive governance framework that integrates policing, urban planning, technological innovation, and community engagement to maintain order, protect urban infrastructure, and promote sustainable and secure urban development in contemporary cities.

Security Governance

Security governance refers to the structures, processes, policies, and institutional arrangements through which security policies are formulated, implemented, and monitored in order to protect citizens, maintain public order, and manage emerging threats within a society. The concept emphasizes the coordinated role of both state and non-state actors in the management of security and recognizes that modern security challenges such as terrorism, cybercrime, and organized crime require collaborative and multi-level governance mechanisms.

In contemporary security studies, security governance is viewed as a framework that integrates governmental institutions, private organizations, civil society, and international partners in decision-making, resource allocation, and operational security management.

According to Lenshie and Jatau (2025), security governance is the combination of state and non-state institutions, policies, and formal and informal networks that influence how protection, regulation of violence, and security service delivery are organized within a society. Similarly, Ola et al. (2024) describe security governance as a dynamic system of managing security through coordinated interactions among multiple actors in response to evolving security threats and the increasing complexity of modern societies. This perspective highlights that effective security governance goes beyond traditional state-centric security by promoting accountability, collaboration, and inclusive participation in security decision-making. Consequently, security governance plays a crucial role in ensuring that security institutions operate transparently, efficiently, and in alignment with democratic principles while addressing both traditional and non-traditional threats at national and global levels.

Theoretical Framework

The Routine Activity Theory

The study is anchored in Routine Activity Theory (RAT), originally formulated by Cohen and Felson (1979) to explain how crime occurs not merely because of criminal motivations but through the convergence in time and space of three elements: a motivated offender, a suitable target, and the absence of a capable guardian. In urban settings such as Abuja, the routine activities of individuals movements, work schedules, residential patterns create predictable opportunities for crime. RAT shifts the focus from why offenders commit crime to how situational conditions enable criminal events, making it particularly suitable for analysing the role of private security organizations in crime prevention (Felson & Eckert, 2020).

RAT posits that crime is prevented when capable guardianship is consistently present (Cohen & Felson, 1979). Private security organizations function as *capable guardians* by increasing the perceived risk of detection and intervention. The empirical findings from Abuja illustrate that private security personnel provide access control, surveillance, patrol operations, and crowd management all of which serve to block the convergence of motivated offenders and suitable targets. By maintaining a visible presence in residential estates, banks, hotels, and critical infrastructure, they alter the opportunity structure that would otherwise facilitate crime (Eck & Weisburd, 2015). Moreover, their roles in intelligence gathering and incident reporting extend guardianship beyond individual sites, contributing to what RAT terms “supervisory

guardianship” (Reynald, 2019). Thus, the theory affirms that private security organizations directly reduce crime opportunities by embedding capable guardians into the routines of Abuja’s urban spaces.

RAT highlights that guardianship is not merely about presence but about capability the ability, preparedness, and willingness to intervene effectively (Tseloni et al., 2017). The findings reveal that inadequate training, poor remuneration, and the proliferation of unlicensed security firms undermine the quality of guardianship provided. When guards lack proper skills or motivation, they become “ineffective guardians” who may fail to detect suspicious activities or deter offenders, thereby allowing the convergence of offenders and targets to occur (Hollis et al., 2013). Additionally, weak collaboration between private security and public law enforcement fragments the broader guardianship network. RAT emphasizes that guardianship is most effective when it is coordinated and when information flows seamlessly across multiple actors (Felson, 2006). The absence of such coordination in Abuja creates gaps in surveillance coverage, effectively recreating the conditions for crime even in areas where private security is nominally present.

In conclusion, applying Routine Activity Theory to this study demonstrates that private security organizations in Abuja are critical components of the city’s crime prevention architecture precisely because they serve as capable guardians who disrupt the spatio-temporal convergence of offenders and targets. However, the theory also reveals that their contribution is contingent upon the quality, coordination, and institutional support that underpin their guardianship functions. By framing the research questions within RAT, the study provides a structured analysis that not only identifies the preventive roles of private security but also explains why challenges such as inadequate training and weak inter-agency collaboration diminish their capacity to reduce crime opportunities. This theoretical grounding underscores that enhancing private security effectiveness requires more than deploying personnel; it demands systematic investments in professional standards, regulatory enforcement, and collaborative frameworks that strengthen the broader guardianship ecosystem in the Federal Capital Territory.

Methodology

The study adopts a qualitative research design, utilizing secondary data to examine the roles of private security organizations in crime prevention in Abuja, FCT, Nigeria. Sources include academic journals, books, government and NGO reports, international organization publications, and magazines. Data were critically analyzed to identify patterns, trends, and governance implications.

Discussion of Findings

The first research objective which examine roles of private security organizations in crime prevention in Abuja. The data presented in the study indicates that private security organizations have become important

actors in contemporary security governance due to the growing limitations of public policing institutions. Globally and within Nigeria, the increasing complexity of crime, rapid urbanization, and expanding economic infrastructure have created security gaps that public security agencies alone cannot adequately address. In Abuja, private security organizations perform several operational functions that contribute to crime prevention, including access control, surveillance, patrol operations, crowd management, and the protection of critical infrastructure. These services are particularly relevant in residential estates, banks, hotels, shopping complexes, and government facilities where private security guards often serve as the first point of contact in identifying suspicious activities and preventing criminal intrusion. Their visible presence also functions as a deterrent to potential offenders, thereby reducing opportunities for crime in high-risk urban environments. Furthermore, the study highlights that private security organizations support public security agencies through intelligence gathering, incident reporting, and emergency response mechanisms. Such complementary roles reflect the concept of plural policing, where both public and private actors collaborate to maintain social order and enhance community safety. However, while private security organizations provide essential preventive functions, their effectiveness largely depends on the degree of coordination with formal law-enforcement agencies and the availability of modern surveillance technologies. Therefore, the analysis suggests that private security organizations significantly strengthen urban crime prevention in Abuja by filling operational gaps in the formal security system and expanding the capacity of the broader security architecture.

The second research objective focuses on identifying the challenges affecting the effectiveness of private security organizations in crime prevention in Abuja. Empirical literature reveals that despite their increasing relevance, several structural and institutional constraints limit the operational capacity of private security organizations. One major challenge is inadequate training and professional development among security personnel, which reduces their ability to respond effectively to complex security threats. In addition, poor remuneration and unfavorable working conditions often affect the motivation and professionalism of private security guards, thereby weakening their overall performance. Another critical challenge is the proliferation of unlicensed or poorly regulated private guard companies, which undermines professional standards within the industry and creates security vulnerabilities. Reports from regulatory authorities such as the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps indicate that several security firms operate without proper licensing, raising concerns about regulatory compliance and operational accountability. Furthermore, weak collaboration between private security companies and public law-enforcement agencies continues to hinder effective information sharing and coordinated responses to crime. Institutional mistrust, bureaucratic barriers, and unclear operational frameworks often limit the integration of private security actors into the broader national security strategy. Consequently, although private security organizations have the potential to significantly

support crime prevention in Abuja, addressing issues related to regulation, training, remuneration, and inter-agency collaboration is essential for improving their effectiveness and ensuring that they contribute meaningfully to urban security management in the Federal Capital Territory.

Conclusion

The study confirms that private security organizations have become indispensable actors in crime prevention within Abuja, operating as strategic complements to the public police. Their roles ranging from access control and surveillance to patrol operations and critical infrastructure protection fill significant gaps created by the limitations of public policing in an increasingly complex urban environment. By serving as visible deterrents, first responders, and intelligence-gathering agents, these organizations contribute substantially to the day-to-day security of residential estates, commercial hubs, and government facilities. Their presence not only reduces opportunities for criminal activity but also embodies the concept of plural policing, wherein public and private actors collaboratively uphold safety. However, the effectiveness of these roles is contingent upon sustained coordination with formal law-enforcement agencies and the adoption of modern security technologies. Overall, the study affirms that private security organizations play a vital role in expanding the security architecture of the Federal Capital Territory, yet their continued relevance will depend on strengthening the synergy between private and public security actors.

Despite their growing importance, the effectiveness of private security organizations in Abuja is constrained by several structural and institutional challenges. Inadequate training, poor remuneration, and unfavourable working conditions undermine the professionalism and motivation of security personnel, limiting their capacity to respond to sophisticated threats. Additionally, the proliferation of unlicensed and poorly regulated private guard companies weakens industry standards and introduces accountability gaps that can be exploited by criminal elements. Weak collaboration between private security firms and public law-enforcement agencies further compounds these problems, as fragmented communication and bureaucratic barriers prevent seamless information sharing and coordinated incident response. These challenges highlight that while private security organizations hold significant potential for crime prevention, their contribution remains suboptimal without robust regulatory oversight, investment in human capital, and a clearly defined framework for inter-agency cooperation. Addressing these deficiencies is therefore essential to transform private security from a supplementary presence into a reliable pillar of urban security governance in Abuja.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, two key recommendations can be made:

- i. Enhance Training and Professional Development: Private security organizations should implement regular and comprehensive training programs for their personnel, focusing on modern surveillance techniques, emergency response, conflict management, and ethical standards. This will improve the capacity of security guards to handle complex urban security challenges effectively and increase their overall professionalism and operational efficiency.
- ii. Strengthen Regulation and Public-Private Collaboration: Government agencies, such as the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, should enforce stricter licensing and regulatory oversight to eliminate unlicensed operators and uphold industry standards. Additionally, fostering structured collaboration between private security firms and public law-enforcement agencies will enhance intelligence sharing, coordinated responses to crime, and integration into the broader security framework in Abuja.

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