

## SIT-AT-HOME AND CIVIL LIBERTY IN SOUTH EAST, NIGERIA

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### Abstract

*An analysis of South East geopolitical zone's socio-political development, which dismisses the effect of sit-at-home, would be one which neither realities nor facts warrant. It is against this backdrop, the study interrogates the effects of sit-at-home on civil liberty in South East, Nigeria. In particular, the study sought to determine if the enforcement of ghost towns has impinged on security of life and property in South East, Nigeria. The paper underpinned its theoretical framework on human need theory of conflict; and time series research design was adopted, while it hinged its method of data collection on documentation. Content/qualitative analysis was utilized to analyze data obtained. Findings revealed that insecurity and disaster have won the race against civil liberty in the South Eastern States of Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo as a result of the enforcement of ghost towns. It concluded that sit-at-home has shrunked the atmosphere of civil liberty in the South East, Nigeria. The paper therefore, recommended that rather than building Guantanamo bay-like fencing around security formations in the zone, the government inculcates the spirit of responsibility under the canopy of rule of law and constructively engage the Ndi-Igbo.*

**Keywords:** Sit-at-home, Ghost Towns, Civil Liberty, Enforcement, Security, Responsibility, Constructive engagement

### Introduction

One of the most dramatic and strategic political manifestations of the sit-at-home in Nigeria, as an instrument of protest is, of course, the erosion of government's legitimacy through the trampling of the civil liberty of the people and residents of the south-east geopolitical zone. In fact, the regime of sit-at-home in Igboland has largely neutralized the legitimacies of the central and states governments. The enforcers can restrict human and vehicular movements, destroy public and private property and murder individuals that breached the order every Monday, IPOB's leader court appearance days as well as every other important date to the group. Sit-at-home order has been enforced in several parts of the world including Nigeria, particularly in the southeast region, as a protest against the continuous detention of the IPOB leader, Nnadi Kanu, in the department of state service facility. While this has been effective measure in some aspects, there have also been concerns raised about its impact on civil liberties in the region.

Studies by Uzor & Iroha 2021, Aligwekwe, 2022, Njoku, 2022, Ugwu, 2022, Obi, Mark & Chibuzor 2022 and Anudu, 2022, examined the human rights implications of the sit-at-home order in the southeast region of Nigeria. The study revealed that the enforcement of sit-at-home orders in the region has led to several human rights abuses, including the violation of the right to freedom of expression, freedom of association, and the right to livelihood. The study also found that the enforcement of the sit-at-home order has led to an increase in illegal checkpoints, Studies arbitrary arrests, and detention of residents by law enforcement agents in the region. They posited that sit-at-home is the self-inflicted devastation of the south east.

Bloom, 2023, Bronstein 2022, McConlogue 2022, Liepert 2022 and Johnson, Pelly, Rutland, Boss, Dariot & Moore 2022, quipped that civil liberty is a fundamental concept stemming from the notion that individuals are endowed with certain inherent rights simply by virtue of being human beings. Such rights are considered "civil" in nature when they pertain to an individual's freedoms within a society, including

such things as freedom of speech, religion, and assembly, as well as the right to legal representation and due process under the law. At the core of civil liberty is the idea that individuals have the right to live their lives free from undue interference, and to exercise their individual rights without fear of persecution or discrimination. Given its significance in society, civil liberty is an ongoing topic of discussion and debate, both in Nigeria and around the world. Similarly, in a report published by Amnesty International (2021), they raised concerns about the human rights violations that have been associated with the implementation of sit-at-home orders in the southeast region of Nigeria. The report featured several cases of arbitrary assault, harassment, and intimidation of residents who were caught breaching the order during travel or leaving their homes for other reasons.

However, despite these concerns, the sit-at-home order in the southeast region of Nigeria remains in place, with further restrictions being imposed by some groups. It is, therefore, essential that such measures are implemented within the confines of the law, respecting the rights of the people and residents.

The implementation of sit-at-home orders in the southeast region of Nigeria has raised several concerns about the potential impact on civil liberties in the region. One of the major problems is the increase in human rights violations by law enforcement agencies and other groups enforcing the sit-at-home order. In a report by Amnesty International (2021), they stated that the implementation of the sit-at-home order in the southeast region of Nigeria has led to a range of human rights violations, including arbitrary arrests, detention, harassment, and extortion of residents who are perceived to have violated the order. The report also highlights the activities of armed groups, who have exploited the situation to carry out violent attacks, abductions, and extrajudicial killings.

Additionally, the implementation of the sit-at-home order in the southeast region of Nigeria has also had adverse effects on the economic and social wellbeing of residents. The closure of markets, transportation, and other economic activities has left millions of people in the region without a means of livelihood, aggravating poverty levels and food insecurity.

Scholars such as Uzor & Iroha 2021, Chibuzor 2022, Anudu, 2022, Ogunode & Chijiodu 2022, Ofona 2023, Ekechukwu, & Nwaju, 2023, Ezewudo, Ukwuoma & Uroke 202, Adiegwu & Nzekwu, 2022, Chen, Yu & Zhang 2022, D'Amico, Maio, Peluso & Siciliana 2020, Lu, Su & Jarvis 2020, Papacharalampous, & Kouli, 2021, Wu, Zhang & Wong 2019, Chavis, Esposito & Saunders (2019), have all looked at diverse aspects of ghost towns and security, including risk assessment, resilience, urban planning, and hazard mitigation. They highlight the importance of assessing the dangers of abandoned towns and identifying opportunities for their revitalization. The references can prove useful for scholars, policymakers, and community organizers grappling with these challenges in various contexts worldwide. None of these scholars had narrowed his or her study to sit-at-home and civil liberty in south east, Nigeria. Hence, this study intends to bridge these gaps by examining sit-at-home and civil liberty in south eastern Nigeria.

To drive the paper home and address these issues, this research question was formulated;

Does the enforcement of ghost towns impinge on security of lives and property of the people and residents in South East, Nigeria?

### **Enforcement of Ghost Towns and Security of Lives and Property**

Ghost towns are abandoned towns or villages that are usually left unoccupied due to various reasons, including natural disasters, economic decline, or social conflict. The abandoned buildings and infrastructure in ghost towns can present risks to people and property, which can result in a significant threat to security. One of the significant risks associated with ghost towns is the instability of the abandoned structures, which can pose a threat to people's lives and property. According Rittmannsberger

2016 and Chavis, Esposito & Saunders 2019 abandoned buildings and infrastructure in ghost towns can collapse or decay over time, leading to structural issues that can be hazardous to human health and safety. Another significant security threat associated with ghost towns is the lack of infrastructure and services like healthcare and emergency services. According to a study by Dyer et al. (2020), abandoned towns may lack essential services like law enforcement, medical care, and fire services, which can put people's lives and property at risk.

Furthermore, ghost towns can become breeding grounds for crime, and a significant security concern. According to a study by Chavis et al. 2019, Adiegwu & Nzekwu, 2022, Chen, Yu & Zhang 2022, D'Amico, Maio, Peluso & Siciliana 2020, Lu, Su & Jarvis 2020, Papacharalampous, & Kouli., abandoned towns can be attractive to criminals and illegal activities, such as drug trafficking, human trafficking, and vandalism, which can pose a threat to the security of the local community. Similarly, ghost town policies have been used in various parts of Africa, including Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea, as a means to protest government policies or as a means of political and social control (Azaiki, 2019). However, the implementation of such policies can lead to disruptions in economic and social activities, which can have a negative impact on the security of life and property.

Moreover, studies by Ekechukwu, & Nwaju, 2023, Ezewudo, Ukwuoma & Uroke 2022, Osita., Anoke & Eze 2022 and Adiegwu & Nzekwu Owonikoko et al. (2021), they examined the impact of the Sit-at-Home order in Nigeria's Southeast region and found that the policy led to disruptions in social and economic activities, leading to loss of income, which in turn increased the risk of insecurity in the region. They also noted that the sit-at-home policy increased the presence of security agents, who carried out arrests and detention, leading to human rights abuses in the region.

Studies by Gu et al. (2018) Bloom, 2023, Bronstein 2022, McConlogue 2022, Liepert 2022, Johnson, Pelly, Rutland, Boss, Dariot & Moore 2022, Montgomery & Noor 2022, Bedi 2022 Farnworth, Matarasso, & Winkler 2017 and Richman & Seo 2022 investigated the relationship between property rights and urbanization in China and found that the right to land ownership can have a significant impact on whether a town becomes a ghost town or not. According to their findings, towns with strong property rights tend to have a higher rate of investment and are less likely to become abandoned.

Other studies examined the relationship between the loss of life and property and the phenomenon of ghost towns in China and other places. The researchers found that the main cause of ghost towns in China is economic decline, which leads to a decrease in investment and employment opportunities, causing people to leave the town (Farnworth, Matarasso & Winkler 2017, Azaiki 2019, Campbell 2000, Papacharalampous, & Kouli 2021 Heryanto & Dion 2020, Heryanto & Dion 2020, Froning 2010, Johnson, Pelly, Ruhland, Boss, Dariottes & Moore 2022, Liebert 2022 and McConlogue 2022). To address these security concerns, some studies suggest revitalization and redevelopment of abandoned towns. Farnworth et al. 2017 and Rittmannsberge Kanti, Paul & Neyer, (2016). repurposing abandoned buildings and infrastructure can help to enhance public safety and security in these areas (Farnworth et al. 2017 and Richard, 2022).

The enforcement of ghost town policies can have considerable effects on the security of life and property. It is important that such measures are implemented in a way that civil liberties are upheld. Future research could focus on the impact of these policies on particular regions, such as the Southeast region of Nigeria. One of the most significant consequences of ghost towns is the loss of life and property. When a town becomes abandoned, there is often no one around to take care of the buildings and infrastructure. As a result, these structures can become dangerous and pose a risk to anyone who might venture into the town.

In conclusion, ghost towns present significant security risks to human life and property. Addressing these concerns require innovative strategies, including providing essential services, and restoring the

social fabric and economy of the affected communities. One of the most significant consequences of ghost towns is the loss of life and property. When a town becomes abandoned, there is often no one around to take care of the buildings and infrastructure. As a result, these structures can become dangerous and pose a risk to anyone who might venture into the town.

### **Human Needs Theory of Conflict**

The human needs theory of conflict suggests that conflicts arise due to unfulfilled and unsatisfied human needs. These needs can be categorized into five basic categories: physical, safety, social, esteem, and self-actualization. The theory was first proposed by John Burton, an Australian conflict resolution scholar in the late 1960s. The main premise of the theory suggests that individuals and groups have basic needs that must be satisfied to avoid conflict. When one or more of these needs are not met or are threatened, individuals or groups may resort to conflict as a means of fulfilling these needs. Moreover, Burton suggested that conflicts may have a destructive effect on human needs, leading to further conflict and dissatisfaction. Its major proponents include: Boulding 1956, Kelman 1971, Compell 2002, Frong 2010, Vayrymen 1957, Abu-Nimer 1999, Lederach, 2005

The major assumptions of Human Needs Theory of conflict are:

- **Basic Human Needs:** The Human Needs Theory of Conflict posits that all individuals have a set of basic needs that must be satisfied to maintain their well-being. As applied to Ghost Towns and the loss of life and property, the basic human needs at risk would include the physiological, safety, and security needs required for survival.
- **Goal Incompatibility:** Conflict arises when individuals or groups have competing goals that they are seeking to achieve, and those goals are incompatible. In the context of Ghost Towns, goal incompatibility can be seen when the original inhabitants of a town leave due to their economic goals are no longer attainable, while potential buyers or investors have different goals, such as seeking a profit from the town's sale or transformation.
- **Identity:** Conflicts can emerge when individuals perceive a threat to their identity, values, or beliefs. In the context of Ghost Towns, individuals may resist changes to the town's historical landmarks or seek to preserve the town's values amidst its economic decline.
- **Communication Failure:** Communication failure can occur when communication between individuals is limited or absent to resolve their differences or misunderstandings. In the context of Ghost Towns, communication failures can result in the lack of willingness to listen and understand opposing interests, leading to misinterpretations and violent outcomes.
- **External Actors and Resources:** External actors can influence the dynamics of conflicts over Ghost Towns by providing resources, such as financial, logistical, or technological assistance to facilitate pacification or change. For example, governmental support for community building initiatives or technological innovation for addressing future human needs and utilization of previously abandoned properties could lead to more sustainable outcomes.

The Human Needs Theory of Conflict provides several principles related to a people-centred approach to understanding and ameliorating conflicts over Ghost Towns and the loss of life and property. These principles highlight the basic human needs at play, as well as the role of goal incompatibility, identity, communication failure, and external actors and resources. By considering these principles when addressing conflicts over Ghost Towns, communities can achieve peaceful agreement and incorporate collaborative initiatives as a part of their revitalization strategies to understand the impact of deserted towns on human well-being. The abandoned buildings and infrastructure in ghost towns can put people's

physiological needs at risk, as they can collapse and pose a danger to human life.

The lack of safety in ghost towns can prevent people from fulfilling their safety needs. When towns become abandoned, there may no longer be any emergency services or law enforcement agencies present to respond to criminal activity or natural disasters, putting individuals and communities at risk.

Social connections and a sense of belonging are essential for people's love and belonging needs. However, in ghost towns, it is unlikely that people will come together to form a social community, given that the town's population has left. The lack of safety in ghost towns can prevent people from fulfilling their safety needs. When towns become abandoned, there may no longer be any emergency services or law enforcement agencies present to respond to criminal activity or natural disasters, putting individuals and communities at risk. Goal incompatibility refers to a condition where two or more parties have different and opposing goals or objectives. In the case of enforcing ghost towns and security of lives and property in the South East region of Nigeria, we can see the presence of goal incompatibility among various groups involved.

For example, the government and security forces may be focused on maintaining law and order in the region, while residents may be prioritizing the protection of their lives and property. This can lead to conflict when the government's actions are perceived as threatening or infringing upon the residents' goals. Similarly, businesses and economic interests may be prioritizing the continuation of commercial activity, while residents are calling for boycotts through ghost towns to protest against perceived injustices. The goal incompatibility can create a situation where parties feel that their goals are threatened by the actions of others, and may take actions to try to achieve their goals at the expense of others. This can lead to conflict and violence, as each party tries to achieve its objectives.

## Methodology

The study adopted the time series research design and underpinned its theoretical framework on human need theory of conflict. The study relied on documentary method of data collection by means of which secondary data were gathered. These data were sourced from various relevant scholarly documents, including books, journal articles, newspapers, and official documents from the Nigerian Police Force. Data extracted from these sources were analysed using content analysis, which involves systematic interpretation of qualitative data. Hence, both systematic logical deduction and induction were employed to the end of making relevant inferences from qualitative information/data. Table was also used to further interpret and present data.

### **Selected attacks and violence during the enforcement sit-at-home/ghost towns in the Southeastern, Nigeria between 2021 and 2023.**

<b>Date/Year</b>	<b>Nature of Attacks</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Source</b>
January 8, 2021	Assault on Police Station and three officers killed	Onueke Police Station in Ezza South Local Government Area, Ebonyi State	Vanguard Newspaper
February 23, 2021	Assault on Police Station and three officers killed	Police in Abia State	Premium Times
February 24, 2021	Assault on Patrol Vehicle and one officer killed	Ekwulobia in Anambra State	Premium Times
February 24, 2021	Arson on Police Station. A police officer killed and arms and ammunition looted	Abayi Police Station in Osisioma Ngwu, Abia State	Vanguard Newspaper
February 25, 2021	Assault on Divisional Police Headquarters and an officers wounded	Aboh Mbaise Divisional Headquarters, Imo State	Vanguard Newspaper



March 9, 2021	Arson on Police Station and vehicles destroyed	Police State in Imo State	Premium Times
March 20, 2021	Assault on Divisional Police Headquarters	Isiala Mbano, Divisional Headquarters, Imo State	Premium Times
March 24, 2021	Assault on Professor Charles Soludo at town hall meeting and three police officers killed, and Anambra State Commissioner for Public Utilities, Engr. Emeka Ezenwanne abducted	Town Hall in Isuofia, Aguata, Anambra State	Premium Times
April 5, 2021	Assault on Correctional Facility and 1, 844 inmates freed	Correctional Facility in Owerri, Imo State	Premium Times
May 6, 2021	Arson on National Drug Law Enforcement Agency Office	National Drug Law Enforcement Agency Office in Amaekpu, Ohafia, Abia State	Daily Trust Newspaper
May 9, 2021	Assault on Police Station	Police Station at Trademore Estate in Ubani, Abia State	This Day Newspaper
May 17, 2021	Assault on Divisional Police Station and two Police Officers killed	Divisional Police Station in Umuahia, Abia State	The Guardian Newspaper
May 31, 2021	Arson on Police Station	Mbieri Police Divisional Headquarters, Imo State	Channels Television
May 31, 2021	Assault on L.G.A.	Enugu East Council Headquarters	Vanguard Newspaper
June 4, 2021	Assault on Gov. Uzodinma Hope	Gov. Hope Uzodinma's Country home: Omuma, Oru East L.G.A of Imo State	Channels Television
June 7, 2021	Four Police Officers killed	Different locations in Rivers State	Vanguard Newspaper
June 7, 2021	Shooting incidence between the police and the gunmen	Eke Obinagu Market in the Ogui area of Enugu State.	Channels TV
June 7, 2021	Several assault on Police Checkpoint and five policemen killed	Police checkpoint at the Ohafia L. G. A. of Abia State	Premium Times
June 8, 2021	Assault at a checkpoint and one police officer killed and injured another.	Checkpoint along the Enugu-Port Harcourt Expressway	Premium Times
June 8, 2021	Five Police Officers Killed and property destroyed	Police Station in Akwa Ibom	Premium Times
June 9, 2021	Assault on Police Checkpoint	Police station in the Ehime Mbano L.G. A. of Imo State	Vanguard Newspaper
July 21, 2021	Assault at a checkpoint and six police officer killed and firearms stolen.	Checkpoint in Enugu State	Garda World
October 9, 2022	Assault on Police Station and two officers killed	<a href="#">Inyi Police Division</a> in Oji River Local Government Area of Enugu State	Channels Television
January 18, 2023	Assault on Police Station and two officers killed	Nwaorieubi Police Station, in Oji River Local Government Area of Enugu State,	Vanguard Newspaper

**Source: Authors compilation from different media sources**

Table 1 shows the several reports of attacks on people and property during the enforcement of sit-at-home orders in southeastern Nigeria in recent times, particularly in the states of Imo, Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, and Enugu. Essentially, these attacks have resulted in loss of life and property, leading to increased tensions in the region. The underlying causes of the attacks are complex, including political and economic grievances, as well as ethno-religious tensions. It is important to note that these are just a few examples of the incidents that have been reported in the region and there may be more incidents that have not been reported yet. The enforcement of ghost towns in the southeastern region of Nigeria suggests that while it may be an effective means of protest, it has significant impacts on security. Displacement of residents, lack of police presence and economic disruption can all lead to an increase in crime and insecurity. Efforts are being made by the government and security agencies to address the situation and restore peace and stability to the Southeast region of Nigeria.

### **Findings and Discussion**

In recent years, the use of ghost towns as a means of civil disobedience has gained popularity in the southeastern region of Nigeria. This tactic involves the complete shutdown of all economic and social activities within a particular town or city. It is employed as a way of showing resistance to the government's perceived neglect of the region or as a means of protesting against certain government policies. However, the use of ghost towns has unintended consequences that have led to increased insecurity in the region. Otu et al., (2018) argues that the enforcement of ghost towns is a form of civil disobedience that involves the closure of businesses and markets in a particular area for a specific period as a means of protest. In southeastern Nigeria, the practice dates back to the 1990s when it was used as a non-violent means of protesting against Nigeria's military government (Ezeani & Okoli, 2019).

The enforcement of ghost towns in southeastern Nigeria has been a contentious issue due to its perceived impact on security. This is due to the fact that criminal elements have taken advantage of the situation to carry out their activities, with little or no resistance from security personnel. Several studies have highlighted the potential negative impacts of ghost towns on the security situation in the region. For instance, Ezeh and Ajaero (2018) found that ghost towns could lead to an increase in crime due to the lack of police presence and the disruption of economic activities. It is often linked to sit-at-home orders due to civil liberty concerns. Sit-at-home orders are typically issued by separatist groups in the region as a way to protest against perceived injustices or as a way to enforce their agenda. However, this order often result in the disruption of commercial activities, human and vehicular movements which impact the social and economic life of the region, as well as undermines civil liberties such as freedom of movement and expression.

Ezeani and Okoli (2019) observed that the enforcement of ghost towns could lead to a failure of social control and increased insecurity by disrupting daily routines and the overall socioeconomic structure. Enforcement of ghost towns during sit-at-home orders is usually carried out by unidentified groups, who are responsible for ensuring compliance to the order. However, the enforcement strategies of these agents are sometimes met with resistance from the residents, who see it as an infringement on their civil liberties. As a result, conflicts often occur, which lead to loss of lives and property.

Recently, the use of ghost towns in southeastern Nigeria has become more frequent as various groups have adopted the practice to voice their grievances. While some individuals and groups believe that ghost towns are an effective way to demand attention and bring about change, others argue that the enforcement of ghost towns can lead to increased insecurity (Vanguard News. 2019). Insecurity is a major concern in southeastern Nigeria as the region has experienced several forms of violence, including clashes between farmers and herders, ethnic and religious conflicts, as well as criminal activities such as kidnapping and robbery (Ezeh & Ajaero, 2018).

In terms of policy and law enforcement, the practice of ghost towns challenges the sovereignty of the state and its ability to maintain law and order. The absence of police activities during ghost towns increases the likelihood of criminal activities and violence (Ezeh & Ajaero, 2018). Therefore, enforcing ghost towns could give rise to an environment of insecurity by creating opportunities for criminal enterprises to thrive. According to a report by the Nigeria Police Force, there has been a significant increase in crime rates in the South East region in recent years. For instance, in 2020, the region recorded a total of 4,245 reported cases of armed robbery, 1,872 cases of kidnapping, and 1,072 cases of cultism (Nigeria Police Force, 2020). These statistics suggest that there has been an alarming increase in violent crime in the region, of which the enforcement of ghost towns may be contributing factors.

United States Institute of Peace (2019) opined that the enforcement of ghost towns in the southeast has left a vacuum that has been filled by criminal elements, who use the opportunity to perpetuate acts of violence against businesses and individuals. This report further highlights that the enforcement of ghost towns has inadvertently created an enabling environment for criminal activities, resulting in a significant rise in violent crimes such as armed robbery, kidnapping, and murder. Furthermore, a research article published in the *International Journal of Criminology and Sociology*, argues that the use of ghost towns has contributed to the breakdown of law and order in the region, leading to an increase in insecurity (Mbanefo & Nwafor, 2020). The article suggests that the enforcement of ghost towns has led to an increase in social disorder, which has created an environment that is conducive to crime and other forms of violence.

Additionally, the shutdown of economic activities has created hardship and economic deprivation for the people in the region, leading to increased poverty and unemployment. The economic hardship resulting from the sit-at-home order has driven some people into criminality, worsening the security situation in the region (McQuade, 2020). As noted by the African Development Bank Group (2018), the ghost town closures have hampered investment in the region and weakened the overall economic growth prospects. The imposition of ghost towns can lead to the displacement of residents and the disruption of daily life, which can create tension and conflict within the affected communities. Otu et al. (2018) revealed that the imposition of ghost towns had negative implications for the socioeconomic development of southeastern Nigeria. This study found that the closure of businesses and markets during ghost towns could lead to the loss of income, economic hardship, and unemployment.

According to a report by the Council on Foreign Relations (2021a), Nigeria's growing insecurity is rooted in decades-long socioeconomic and political challenges, including corruption, economic inequality, and a lack of effective governance, especially at the state and local levels. The use of ghost town as a means of protest has led to an increase in crime and violence in the region. The report notes that when people stay indoors, it creates an environment in which criminal elements can operate with relative impunity, leading to an increase in violent crime and other security challenges. The report further states that crimes, including kidnapping, banditry, and militancy, are becoming more frequent and violent, particularly in the country's north and southeast (Council on Foreign Relations, 2021b).

Furthermore, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) (2013) assert that poverty, unemployment and underemployment, and lack of opportunities for economic and social advancement, combined with the availability of firearms and other weapons, are among the root causes of crime and insecurity in Nigeria. Similarly, a report by the *Guardian Nigeria* newspaper indicates that the enforcement of ghost towns has led to a sharp decline in economic activities in the South East region. The report notes that the enforcement of ghost towns has led to the shutdown of businesses and markets in the region, resulting in a loss of revenue and job opportunities (The *Guardian Nigeria*, 2021). This disruption in economic activity has created an environment in which criminal elements can operate, leading to an increase in insecurity.



Finally, while the use of ghost towns as a means of protest may appear as an effective tool for resistance, the unintended security consequences are severe. The enforcement of ghost towns in southeastern Nigeria has a negative impact on security due to the disruption of social and economic activities, displacement of communities, and lack of police presence which can lead to an upsurge in criminal activity and violence. To address this issue, there is a need for a multi-faceted approach that addresses the root causes of insecurity, such as poverty, unemployment, corruption, and poor governance. The government and other stakeholders (such as the civil society organizations, and the private sector) need to engage with the people in the region to address the underlying issues that trigger the use of ghost towns. This will help to reduce the need for such protests and promote a more peaceful and prosperous society in the southeast region of Nigeria.

### Conclusion

To ensure that the enforcement of ghost towns and security respects civil liberties, there is a need for a more dialogue-based approach that involves all stakeholders, including separatist groups, government agencies, and citizens. This approach should be based on mutual respect for legal and democratic processes that ensure constructive engagement between stakeholders. Moreover, there is also a need for the government to address the underlying causes of these conflicts that lead to the issuance of sit-at-home orders. These underlying causes include marginalization, social inequality, political instability, poverty, and unemployment. By addressing these causes, the government can help reduce the likelihood of conflicts and ensure that civil liberties are respected.

In conclusion, the enforcement of ghost towns and security of lives and property during sit-at-home orders is a complex issue that requires a multi-stakeholder approach and a commitment to respecting civil liberties. The government and security agencies must work with separatist groups and citizens to find peaceful ways to address their grievances and reduce conflicts. Additionally, efforts must be made to address underlying issues that lead to sit-at-home orders to ensure lasting peace and stability in the region.

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