



Federal Road Safety Corps and National Security in Lafia Sector Command, Nasarawa State in the 21st Century

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ABSTRACT: This study examines the impact of the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) on national security with specific reference to the Lafia Sector Command in Nasarawa State. Although established primarily as a road-safety organisation, the FRSC has increasingly assumed roles that extend into the broader security architecture of Nigeria. Using Structural Functionalism Theory, it argues that situated along key transit routes linking the Federal Capital Territory with major northern states, the Lafia Sector Command occupies a strategic position in the regulation of vehicular movement, intelligence gathering, and monitoring of transportation networks. Besides, the study adopted the historical method in its content analysis where both primary and secondary sources of data were used. The study finds that FRSC operations including enforcement of traffic regulations, verification of vehicle documentation, highway patrols, crash response, and collaboration with security agencies play pivotal roles to preventing the mobility of criminal elements to reduce road-related fatalities, and to enhance public safety. The research further reveals that the Command contributes significantly to national security through public enlightenment, data-driven road management, and support during emergencies, communal conflicts, and high-risk national events. However, the FRSC's capacity is constrained by logistical limitations, inadequate technology, insufficient manpower, corruption, and occasional inter-agency coordination challenges. The study concludes that the FRSC in Lafia Sector Command has made tremendous contributions to national security beyond its primary mandate of traffic administration. These efforts can be strengthened through improved funding, enhanced training, and deeper inter-agency cooperation to reduce security concerns in a rapidly changing world.

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INTRODUCTION

The concept of national security has evolved significantly over the past decades, expanding from the narrow understanding of territorial defence and military protection to a broader conception that includes internal safety, socio-economic stability, and the well-being of citizens.¹ In the Nigerian context, national security has become a multidimensional challenge due to complex issues ranging from terrorism, armed banditry, and communal conflicts to infrastructural decay and the increasing rate of road traffic crashes. Road safety management, previously viewed merely as a transport-sector concern, is now recognised as a critical component

¹J. G. Carter, "Intelligence-led policing: A review of the literature" *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies and Management* 42, No 1 (2019):5. 6.

of national security because road environments are strategic spaces that influence mobility, economic productivity, crime dynamics, and emergency responses.

Since the 1980s, Nigeria had one of the highest road traffic fatality rates globally, with thousands of deaths annually resulting from poor road culture, dilapidated infrastructure, reckless driving, and lack of institutional coordination.² The unregulated nature of road transport was increasingly seen as a threat to social stability and national development. Road crashes affected the working population, disrupted interstate mobility, and heightened the vulnerability of travellers to criminal activities such as highway robbery, kidnapping, and smuggling.³ The absence of a central enforcement agency meant that road safety responsibilities were fragmented across states and ministries, leading to ineffective coordination. It was within this climate of insecurity, administrative inefficiency, and rising public fear that the Nigerian government acknowledged the need for a federal agency to regulate road transportation, enforce traffic laws, and safeguard public safety.⁴ This national imperative drove the formation of the Federal Roads Safety Corps (FRSC), marking a decisive institutional shift in Nigeria's approach to internal security management.

Since its creation, the FRSC has assumed a strategic position within the national security architecture, going beyond its foundational mandate of reducing road traffic crashes. As Ibekwe opines, modern security analysis shows that highways function as critical arteries for economic movement, military logistics, intelligence operations, and law enforcement activities.⁵ Any disruption within this network whether caused by traffic crashes, illegal roadblocks, vehicular breakdowns, or criminal elements can compromise national stability. The FRSC's role in traffic regulation, patrol operations, and rapid emergency response therefore contributes directly to securing the internal environment.

Despite these achievements, significant challenges persist. Nigeria continues to record alarming levels of road traffic crashes due to human factors, inadequate transport infrastructure, and logistic deficiencies within the FRSC itself. Insecurity in certain regions restricts effective patrol operations, while funding shortages limit technological upgrades and personnel deployment.⁶ These constraints raise critical questions about the capacity of the FRSC to fully actualise its mandate in a rapidly evolving security landscape. Besides, the increasing sophistication of criminal networks requires deeper integration of FRSC operations within the broader national security architecture. This study examines the contribution of FRSC operations in the improvement of national security. In other words, it investigates the historical transformation of FRSC and the dynamics of their operations. The study interrogates the connection between road crash, crimes, and road misconducts among the citizens and national security. The study also looks at FRSC's operations and their impact on national security.

Conceptualising National Security

National security encompasses the protection of a nation from threats to its sovereignty, territorial integrity, and the well-being of its citizens.⁷ Traditionally associated with military defence, the concept has expanded to include internal security, economic stability, public safety, and infrastructure protection. Within this expanded view, road safety emerges as a crucial component of national security because the transportation network is essential for economic activity, emergency response, mobility, and law enforcement. The Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) was established primarily to reduce road traffic crashes, enforce traffic laws, and improve road safety in Nigeria. Its operations include vehicle and driver regulation, patrol operations, rescue and emergency response, public enlightenment, and collaboration with other security agencies. While its mandate is non-military, FRSC indirectly contributes to national security by ensuring orderly road use, deterring criminal activity, supporting intelligence operations, and facilitating emergency response during security crisis. This study adopts the above definition because of its focus on the impact of absence of security on national development.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Structural Functionalism is a sociological theory that views society as a system of interrelated parts working together to maintain stability, cohesion, and social order. The theory was developed by Talcott Parsons and further refined by Robert Merton, structural functionalism emphasises that social institution including government agencies, law enforcement, and public organisations perform essential functions that contribute to the overall equilibrium of society.⁸ Disruption in any component may lead to dysfunction and societal instability.

The theory aligns with the study because it is viewed as a vital structural component of Nigeria's national security system. Its enforcement, rescue, regulatory, and educational functions serve to maintain social order on the nation's roads. Through structural

²M. Herman, *Intelligence power in peace and war* (Cambridge University Press, 1996) 145.

³H. Ibekwe, *Fundamentals of Road Safety and Journey Management*. (Lagos: Macro Safety, 2021), 12.

⁴M. M. Lowenthal, *Intelligence: From Secrets to Policy* (London: CQ Press, 2020) 12.

⁵Ibekwe, *Fundamentals of Road Safety and Journey...* 34.

⁶L K. Johnson, "The evolution of intelligence gathering" *International Journal of Intelligence and Counter Intelligence* 25, No 1 (2012): 10.

⁷D. Kahn, *The code breakers: The comprehensive history of secret communication from ancient times to internet* (Texas: Scribner, 1996), 345.

⁸ Kahn, *The code breakers: The comprehensive history of secret communication...*, 24.

functionalism, it is evident that corruption within the FRSC represents a dysfunction: it impairs the Corps' capacity to perform its societal roles effectively. Such dysfunction can create ripple effects, including increased road accidents, unregulated transport of dangerous goods, delayed emergency response, and weakened intelligence sharing. All of these consequences compromise internal security and the broader stability of the nation.

The Role of FRSC in Road Traffic and Safety Management in Lafia Sector Command

The Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) plays a pivotal role in promoting road traffic administration and safety management across Nigeria.⁹ The Lafia Sector Command, located in Nasarawa State capital, stands out as a critical operational unit due to the strategic position of the state as a transit corridor linking the North-Central region to the Federal Capital Territory, the Middle Belt, and the northern trade routes. As population growth, urbanisation, commercial activities, and vehicular density increase, road traffic management and safety administration in Lafia require a highly organised, technically competent, and proactive agency. The FRSC Lafia Sector Command fulfils this responsibility through a multi-dimensional operational framework that integrates enforcement, rescue operations, traffic education, data management, collaboration, and infrastructure monitoring.¹⁰

Enforcement is the most visible and fundamental role of the FRSC in Lafia. Operating under the FRSC (Establishment) Act 2007 and the National Road Traffic Regulations (2012), the Corps ensures that road users comply with safety laws designed to reduce crashes, protect human lives, and maintain discipline on roads. Speed violation is one of the common causes of fatal crashes on the Abuja–Keffi–Lafia–Makurdi corridors. FRSC Lafia employs radar guns, speed limit devices, and checkpoints to ensure that commercial drivers adhere to prescribed limits.¹¹ Patrol teams monitor high-risk zones such as Shabu–Agyaragu corridor, Assakio–Doma axis, and routes leading to Akwanga.

The FRSC inspects vehicles for worn tyres, faulty brakes, expired fire extinguishers, broken lights, and general mechanical integrity. Vehicles found unsafe are booked or impounded until repairs are made. Driving without a valid license is a widespread problem in Nasarawa. The FRSC ensures that drivers possess legal authorisation, thereby promoting accountability, competency, and traceability.¹²

FRSC Lafia collaborates with the State Judiciary to organise mobile courts, especially during festive operations. Offenders such as drunk drivers, reckless motorists, and those endangering other road users are prosecuted to strengthen rule of law.¹³ Enforcement roles significantly reduce lawlessness, enhance national security, and create safer roads for socioeconomic activities.¹⁴

Surveillance and patrol operations constitute daily functions of FRSC Lafia and form the backbone of its traffic management role. Patrol teams monitor vehicle flow, enforce regulations, observe traffic density, and respond to emergencies.¹⁵ These teams cover major routes including, Lafia–Akwanga federal highway, Lafia–Doma road, Lafia–Obi road, Lafia–Shabu–Keffi axis.¹⁶ By maintaining visibility, FRSC creates deterrence, discourages reckless driving, and promotes a culture of compliance.

During periods of high vehicular volume, such as holidays, FRSC Lafia executes special Operation Zero, Operation Shield, Operation Safe Passage, Easter/Christmas and Sallah Patrols. These operations reduce congestion, improve highway orderliness, and prevent large-scale accidents.¹⁷ Static points manned by FRSC officers help regulate traffic, especially during peak hours. These points support free movement, minimise gridlock, and monitor environmental risks.

Education plays a vital role in FRSC's strategy to reduce crashes and promote a responsible driving culture. At Lafia Motor Park and other terminals, FRSC officials regularly engage drivers, transport unions, and passengers on topics such as speed control, seatbelt use, dangers of overloading, use of worn-out tyres, and avoidance of drunk driving. The Lafia command partners with Nasarawa Broadcasting Service (NBS), Precious FM, and state private stations to disseminate road safety messages.¹⁸ FRSC conducts Young Drivers' Safety programs, Road Safety Clubs, and training for school children on safe crossing practices. Education fosters compliance at grassroots levels, reducing accident rates and reinforcing public trust.

Rescue operations form a humanitarian and security function of FRSC Lafia, ensuring the protection of lives during road traffic crashes. FRSC rescue marshals provide immediate medical attention to victims before transferring them to hospitals. This reduces the "golden hour" fatalities. FRSC Lafia operates well-equipped ambulances stationed at strategic points to guarantee fast evacuation from crash sites.¹⁹ Federal University of Lafia Teaching Hospital (FULTH) in Lafia serves as the main referral centre. FRSC maintains communication with emergency response units to ensure continuity of care. Rescuers clear obstructions, remove

⁹Oral Interview: Amos Ayimo Dauda, Male, 40 years, Driver, Garaku, 29/11/2025.

¹⁰Oral Interview: Adda Azizi Tanks, Male, 32 years, FRSC, Nasarawa Eggon, 29/11/2025.

¹¹Oral Interview: Davou Mafeng, Male, 35 years, FRSC, Lafia, 29/11/2025.

¹²Fearon and Laitin, "Ethnicity, insurgency and civil war" ... 75.

¹³Oral Interview: Zawua Godwin Akiiga, Male, 55 years, Driver, Lafia, 29/11/2025.

¹⁴Oral Interview: Simdi Wesley Damirim, Male, 58 years, NURTW, Lafia, 23/11/2025.

¹⁵Oral interview: Aniwen Nghile, Male, 37 years, NURTW, Keffi, 29/11/2025.

¹⁶Oral Interview: Mailafiya Salihu, Male, 27 years, Student, Keffi, 29/11/2025.

¹⁷Oral Interview: Luka Joseph Maku, Male, 45 years, NURTW, Lafia, 29/11/2025.

¹⁸Oral Interview: Aboshi Chewy, Male, 30 years, FRSC, Lafia, 29/11/2025.

¹⁹Oral Interview: Angbazo Clement, Male, 41 years, FRSC, Keffi, 29/11/2025.

debris, recover hazardous materials, and coordinate with fire services.²⁰ This prevents secondary accidents and restores traffic flow. Accident scenes are documented through photographs, witness statements, and data entry into the national crash data base. Through these operations, FRSC safeguards lives and sustains national productivity.

The FRSC also ensures security by monitoring suspicious vehicle movements, sharing data with intelligence units, and supporting national identification systems.²¹ These are through the arrest of crime-linked vehicles. Stolen vehicles and illegally modified vehicles are detected during routine stops. FRSC data systems help track suspects, vehicles, and movement patterns. When security agencies face emergencies, FRSC assists in road clearance and evacuation.

Impact of the Federal Road Safety Corps on National Security in Lafia Sector Command, Nasarawa State in the 21st Century

National security in contemporary Nigeria transcends military defence and internal policing. It now encompasses elements such as mobility security, transportation regulation, emergency response, intelligence gathering, and civilian protection on road corridors that serve as lifelines for economic and social activities. Within this broader security framework, the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) plays a significant role. Although established primarily to ensure road safety and prevent traffic crashes, the Corps has evolved into a multidimensional public safety institution whose activities intersect with national security. In volatile regions such as Shendam Road in Lafia an area deeply affected by the kidnapping, the safety of mobility, surveillance of vehicular movements, and protection of commuters are inseparable from national security concerns.²² The FRSC Lafia Sector Command therefore operates at the confluence of road traffic management and counter-insurgency support in a highly challenging security environment.

FRSC's enforcement activities in Lafia extend beyond mere traffic management. In highly insecure environments, road traffic enforcement becomes a tool for monitoring movement, preventing illicit transportation, and reducing opportunities for insurgents and criminals. By enforcing speed limits, vehicle roadworthiness, licensing compliance, haulage regulations, and passenger safety rules, the Corps enhances order, predictability, and discipline on the roads—conditions necessary for stable mobility and early detection of abnormal behaviour.²³

In Lafia, enforcement checkpoints inadvertently function as intelligence filters. Drivers and commuters are required to stop, present identification documents, and submit vehicles to inspection. These seemingly routine procedures help identify stolen vehicles, prevent the use of unregistered transport for insurgent movement, discourage the smuggling of weapons, and reduce the likelihood of criminals blending into civilian traffic. Even though FRSC personnel are not armed, their enforcement presence often attracts collaboration with the Nigerian Army, Police, and Civil Defence officers stationed nearby. Joint checkpoint activities therefore transform FRSC enforcement into a multipurpose operation that contributes directly to national security objectives.²⁴

Moreover, by preventing dangerous driving practices, FRSC reduces the incidence of fatal crashes that could escalate emergency response burdens during times of heightened insecurity.²⁵ In an environment where medical infrastructure is weak and evacuation from rural areas is risky, reducing road traffic crashes indirectly strengthens the region's resilience. The capacity to maintain regulated mobility during conflict is itself a national security asset.

Emergency response constitutes one of FRSC's most visible contributions to national security in Lafia. During attacks, ambushes, improvised explosive device (IED) explosions, and high-impact crashes, the Corps is often among the first institutions to arrive on scene—subject to security clearance. Its role in stabilising victims, providing first aid, organising evacuation, and facilitating communication with hospitals is essential in a region where conflict regularly generates mass casualty incidents.²⁶

The ability of FRSC to respond quickly to emergencies has wider security importance. Effective emergency response reduces fatalities, prevents panic, and helps restore normalcy in tense situations. In regions where public faith in government is fragile, the Corps' intervention reinforces the perception that the state still cares for civilian survival. Additionally, FRSC's partnership with military escorts during emergency missions helps bridge the gap between civilian safety institutions and armed security forces. This cooperative approach fosters a robust national security environment where multiple agencies build a unified response system.

Furthermore, FRSC rescue activities help reduce the exploitation of accident scenes by insurgents who often target rescue teams or fleeing civilians. By coordinating with security forces, the FRSC ensures controlled access to crash sites, preventing their use as traps or ambush points. Such coordination is essential for protecting both civilians and responders, demonstrating how emergency operations contribute to broader internal security in Lafia.²⁷

²⁰Oral Interview: Luka Joseph Maku...

²¹Oral Interview: Aboshi Chewy....

²²Oral Interview: Angbazo Clement...

²³Oral Interview: Angbazo Clement...

²⁴Oral Interview: Panlong D.K, Male, 40 years, FRSC, Akwanga, 29/11/2025.

²⁵Oral Interview: Luka Joseph Maku...

²⁶Oral Interview: Luka Joseph Maku...

²⁷Oral Interview: Luka Joseph Maku...

Although FRSC is not an intelligence agency, its personnel often observe suspicious patterns that are relevant to national security. In conflict-affected areas such as Lafia, the Corps becomes an informal but crucial source of localised intelligence. Through contact with motorists, patrol observations, crash investigations, and road monitoring activities, FRSC officers gain insight into movement trends, behavioural anomalies, unregistered transport activities, and unusual convoy patterns. This information is frequently shared with the Nigerian Army, the Department of State Services (DSS), and the Police. The Corps' access to real-time road data enhances situational awareness for security actors tasked with neutralising insurgent threats. For example, reports about unusual vehicle movements have assisted in intercepting logistical support for insurgents. FRSC's detailed records of transport operators, commercial drivers, and local motor parks help security forces track patterns of movement and identify infiltrators posing as civilians.²⁸

In Lafia, where insurgent movement often involves motorcycles, pickup trucks, and disguised transport vehicles, FRSC's road monitoring functions are indispensable. The Corps' understanding of crash-prone spots, escape routes, and unregulated corridors allows security agencies to plan more effective patrols. Although understated, this intelligence-support role is one of FRSC's most important contributions to national security in the region.²⁹

Another critical dimension of FRSC's impact on national security in Lafia lies in its public enlightenment activities. Community engagement involves educating motorists, transport unions, local leaders, and commuters about road safety standards, compliance expectations, and early warning signs of suspicious activity. In conflict zones, public education transcends road safety and becomes a national security tool. FRSC sensitisation campaigns in Lafia often integrate messages about avoiding illegal transport routes, reporting unfamiliar movements, securing personal items during long-distance travel, and cooperating with security personnel at checkpoints. These campaigns build a community that is more vigilant, more aware of its environment, and more willing to collaborate with security institutions. By fostering civilian-security cooperation, FRSC reduces opportunities for insurgents to disguise themselves within the transport system.³⁰

Importantly, many civilians perceive FRSC as a neutral, non-armed agency that is less intimidating than police or military units. This makes communities more willing to approach the Corps with information. Public trust in FRSC therefore serves as a gateway for enhancing national security efforts in Lafia.

Mobility is central to national security, especially in conflict zones where the movement of goods, people, and services is crucial to social survival. In Lafia, FRSC ensures that transport operations remain functional despite the security challenges. The Corps regulates commercial transport operators, oversees loading points, prevents overloading, and ensures that vehicles are fit for travel. These functions sustain essential mobility and reduce the likelihood of breakdowns in hostile areas.³¹

The stabilisation of transportation contributes indirectly to national security by allowing humanitarian agencies, security forces, health institutions, and food distribution networks to operate with fewer risks. When roads are safer and traffic is regulated, the region becomes more accessible for relief operations, military support, and civilian travel.³² In the broader national security architecture, unrestricted access is vital for state presence and counter-insurgency operations. Furthermore, by reducing crashes, FRSC helps preserve scarce medical resources and minimizes the diversion of military assets that would have been needed for rescue operations. This indirectly strengthens capacity for frontline security duties.

The FRSC Lafia Sector Command regularly collaborates with the Nigerian Army, Nigeria Police Force, Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps, and community-based security groups. Inter-agency collaboration is essential in a conflict environment where no single security agency can independently ensure safety. The FRSC's role in joint patrols, checkpoint operations, convoy escorting, and emergency missions enhances a coordinated and unified national security strategy.³³

Joint operations allow FRSC personnel to function effectively without being overwhelmed by security threats. Military escorts make it possible for FRSC to conduct road audits, route inspections, and crash investigations safely. In return, the FRSC provides road data that supports military operations, including planning troop movement, identifying vulnerable road segments, and avoiding areas prone to ambush. This inter-agency synergy is a hallmark of modern national security systems, where the military, law enforcement, and civil safety institutions operate as components of an integrated security network. Lafia security challenges have therefore amplified the necessity and efficiency of FRSC collaboration with other security actors.³⁴

Challenges Facing the Federal Road Safety Corps in Contributing to National Security in Lafia Sector Command

The Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) has evolved from a road traffic regulatory institution into a multifaceted public safety agency whose work touches directly and indirectly on national security. In states such as Nasarawa, particularly the Lafia Sector Command—FRSC operations are increasingly interconnected with issues such as mobility security, conflict spill over from

²⁸Oral Interview: Luka Joseph Maku...

²⁹Oral Interview: Aboshi Chewy...

³⁰Oral Interview: Aboshi Chewy...

³¹Oral Interview: Aboshi Chewy...

³²Oral Interview: Aboshi Chewy...

³³Oral Interview: Aboshi Chewy...

³⁴Oral Interview: Aboshi Chewy...

neighbouring states, inter-ethnic tensions, movement of illicit arms, kidnapping hotspots, and the need for coordinated intelligence along major road corridors.³⁵ However, despite the centrality of FRSC to transportation safety and national security, the agency faces a broad range of challenges that constrain its capacity to function effectively. These challenges undermine not only its statutory roles but also its contributions to national security architecture in Lafia, a major transit hub linking the North-Central and North-East regions of Nigeria.

One of the most significant challenges facing FRSC Lafia Sector Command is inadequate funding, which directly impacts the agency's operational efficiency and national security contributions. The Corps' ability to conduct sustained patrols, enforce safety regulations, gather transport data, and respond to emergencies is conditioned by the availability of functional vehicles, fuel supply, communication tools, and maintenance support. Lafia, being a strategic mobility hub connecting Benue, Plateau, Kaduna, Abuja, and the eastern parts of Nasarawa State, requires robust logistical coverage. However, the Command often operates with a limited number of patrol vehicles, many of which suffer from frequent mechanical breakdowns due to intense usage and poor road conditions. These limitations reduce the command's ability to regularly patrol highways, monitor movement patterns, and maintain a visible presence that could deter criminal activity.³⁶

Moreover, inadequate funding affects the procurement of critical resources such as radios, body cameras, reflective jackets, emergency medical kits, and crash extraction tools. Insecurity around Lafia and its surrounding rural roads means that the FRSC must operate with tools that enhance safety and communication, especially in areas susceptible to banditry or insurgent infiltration. Without reliable communication devices, officers struggle to coordinate with security agencies, report suspicious activities, or request rapid backup during emergencies. Thus, limited funding weakens the Corps' capacity to contribute meaningfully to national security by restricting its ability to engage in proactive surveillance, patrol depth, and timely emergency response.

FRSC Lafia Sector Command suffers from inadequate personnel strength relative to the scale of its responsibilities. As traffic volume increases across the Lafia–Akwanga, Lafia–Makurdi, Lafia–Abuja, and Lafia–Shendam corridors, the burden on available officers becomes overwhelming. The Command is expected not only to regulate traffic but also to support national security through monitoring suspicious movement, reporting criminal tendencies, conducting rescue operations, and collaborating with other agencies. However, the limited number of staff makes it difficult to maintain round-the-clock visibility across major highways and high-risk areas.

The shortage of personnel contributes to patrol fatigue, reduced vigilance, and slower response times during traffic emergencies or security incidents. Many officers are compelled to multitask, covering administrative duties, patrol operations, enforcement checks, and public enlightenment activities simultaneously. Excessive workload leads to operational burnout, reducing the quality of national security relevant observations they can provide. In times of heightened insecurity, particularly during events such as communal clashes, herder-farmer conflicts, or kidnappings along forested roads, the Command lacks sufficient manpower to increase patrol frequency or deploy additional officers for joint operations with other security agencies. This human resource limitation severely constrains FRSC's ability to act as an effective national security partner.³⁷

Lafia and its surrounding areas have increasingly become hotspots for kidnapping, banditry, and rural armed violence. FRSC personnel conducting patrols or rescue operations on highways are exposed to heightened security risks, yet they operate without firearms or protective equipment. This vulnerability deters officers from frequent patrols in high-risk corridors such as the Shendam Road axis, routes bordering Kaduna and Plateau, and rural link roads where kidnappers often operate.

The lack of armed protection limits FRSC's ability to intervene in security-sensitive incidents or thoroughly investigate crash scenes that may involve criminal elements. Officers may be forced to abandon crash victims, avoid suspicious vehicles, or halt enforcement operations due to fear of attack. For example, the presence of armed bandits on certain routes has made it difficult for FRSC to conduct night-time patrols, thereby reducing coverage during hours when criminal activity is most active. Additionally, the slow response of armed security agencies when FRSC calls for assistance further complicates operations. This vulnerability diminishes the Corps' capacity to provide early warning signals and national security surveillance.³⁸

The state of road infrastructure in Nasarawa, especially around Lafia, poses a significant challenge to FRSC's national security efforts. Many rural roads leading into Lafia from Keana, Doma, Awe, and Shendam are poorly maintained, riddled with potholes, narrow, and sometimes impassable during the rainy season. Poor roads increase crash risks, overburden the FRSC with emergency duties, and limit their ability to patrol effectively. Insecurity on bad roads discourages officers from accessing remote areas, thereby reducing spatial coverage and weakening highway surveillance.³⁹

Bad roads also affect the movement of patrol vans, extraction vehicles, and ambulances. Vehicles break down frequently, increasing operational downtime and reducing monitoring frequency. In areas where insurgents, bandits, or criminal gangs exploit poor road conditions to mount illegal checkpoints or ambush civilians, FRSC's inability to monitor these corridors leaves gaps in

³⁵Oral Interview: Aboshi Chewy...

³⁶Oral Interview: Aboshi Chewy...

³⁷Oral Interview: Mailafiya Salihu...

³⁸Oral Interview: Mailafiya Salihu...

³⁹Oral Interview: Mailafiya Salihu...

the state's security architecture. Road degradation also leads to traffic congestion, which criminals exploit to abduct passengers or rob motorists. With limited resources, the Command is unable to deploy sufficient officers to manage these additional risks.

National security in modern societies depends heavily on digital tools such as surveillance systems, automated number plate recognition devices, traffic cameras, GIS mapping, vehicle tracking tools, and real-time data analysis. In Lafia, however, FRSC operates largely with manual data entry processes, paper-based reporting systems, and limited technological infrastructure.⁴⁰ This restricts the ability to provide timely intelligence to security agencies or generate predictive analytics on suspicious road behaviours. Without advanced traffic monitoring tools, the Corps relies primarily on physical observation, which is vulnerable to human error. The absence of surveillance cameras on major highways means that criminal activities, including the transportation of illicit arms, stolen vehicles, or kidnapped victims may go undetected.⁴¹ Limited access to digital communication tools also affects rapid reporting and coordination with military or police units. In a national security context where speed and accuracy are critical, technological underdevelopment significantly reduces FRSC's strategic relevance.

Although FRSC collaborates with other security agencies, coordination challenges persist. Communication delays between FRSC Lafia Sector Command and the Nigeria Police, Civil Defence Corps, or military units weaken the effectiveness of joint operations. These delays arise from bureaucratic bottlenecks, incompatible communication tools, and differences in agency protocols. At accident scenes or suspicious road activity points, slow inter-agency collaboration may lead to preventable deaths, missed intelligence opportunities, or delayed security intervention.⁴²

Additionally, rivalry and occasional mistrust among agencies hinder information sharing. Some security institutions may be reluctant to act promptly on intelligence provided by FRSC officers, perceiving the Corps primarily as a traffic regulator rather than a legitimate security stakeholder. These gaps in coordination reduce the Corps' ability to function as an integral component of the national security framework within Lafia and its surrounding jurisdictions.

Public non-compliance with road safety rules poses a serious challenge to the FRSC's regulatory function and its broader security contribution. Many motorists in Lafia and its surrounding areas fail to adhere to traffic laws, such as vehicle registration, roadworthiness certification, speed limits, and proper documentation. High levels of non-compliance create disorder on the roads, making it more difficult to identify suspicious activities or abnormalities that could indicate security threats.⁴³

Community distrust also affects information sharing. In areas experiencing ethnic tension or intergroup crises, certain communities may view FRSC as aligned with rival groups or government authorities. This perception reduces willingness to collaborate or provide valuable intelligence. Additionally, commercial drivers engaged in illegal transport activities such as night travel in high-risk zones or unregistered haulage may avoid FRSC checkpoints, thereby limiting the Corps' ability to detect criminal transport patterns.

Political interference in enforcement activities creates obstacles for FRSC officers. Some influential individuals may pressure the Command to overlook road safety violations or exempt certain transport operators from compliance requirements. This undermines institutional credibility and produces uneven enforcement patterns, weakening FRSC's moral authority.⁴⁴ Bureaucratic delays in resource distribution, recruitment approvals, promotions, and budget allocations further hinder operational readiness. These political and bureaucratic issues contribute to outdated equipment, insufficient personnel, and slow adoption of modern technology. Over time, systemic administrative challenges reduce the Corps' ability to adopt a national security-oriented operational posture.

While FRSC personnel receive training in road safety, rescue operations, and traffic law enforcement, many officers lack specialised training in security risk assessment, counter-terrorism awareness, intelligence gathering, and high-risk patrol procedures. In Lafia, where kidnapping and armed banditry have increased, officers must possess the skills to identify red flags such as suspicious convoy movement, disguised vehicles, altered plate numbers, and behavioural cues of criminal activity.⁴⁵ Without adequate training, officers may overlook critical information that could aid national security agencies. Moreover, FRSC personnel may be ill-equipped to respond appropriately when confronted with violent threats during patrols or rescue missions.

The rise of armed banditry, kidnapping-for-ransom, and illicit arms movement along Lafia road networks complicates FRSC operations. Criminal networks exploit the geography of Nasarawa bordering states, forests, and rural settlements to evade security forces. These criminals frequently use the same road networks that FRSC patrols, making officers targets of attack.⁴⁶ Worsening insecurity discourages patrols, reduces visibility, and negatively affects public confidence in the agency's capacity to protect commuters. Additionally, areas such as Assakio, Doma Road, Angwanrere, and rural link roads around Agyaragu experience

⁴⁰Oral Interview: Mailafiya Salihu...

⁴¹M. Ottaway, *Democracy challenged: The rise of semi authoritarianism* (Carnegie Endowment for international peace, 2003). 12.

⁴²RAND Corporation, "The future of intelligence gathering: Challenges and opportunities" Research report (2019) 15.

⁴³RAND Corporation, "The future of intelligence gathering: Challenges and opportunities"...15.

⁴⁴J. B. Bruce, "The future of intelligence gathering" *Intelligence and National Security* 35, No 2 (2020) 160.

⁴⁵Bruce, "The future of intelligence gathering...160.

⁴⁶Bruce, "The future of intelligence gathering...160.

periodic security threats that limit FRSC mobility. The inability of the Corps to monitor these insecure routes reduces the scope of its national security contributions.

Corruption within the FRSC represents a critical threat to its effectiveness and, by extension, to national security. Corrupt practices such as bribery during vehicle inspections, collusion with unlicensed operators, or selective enforcement, undermine road discipline, facilitate the illicit transport of contraband, and weaken public trust. When traffic regulations are inconsistently enforced, criminal networks can exploit loopholes to transport arms, smuggle goods, or conduct kidnappings. Consequently, corruption within the FRSC does not merely affect road safety; it has systemic implications for internal security, law enforcement efficacy, and state authority along critical transport corridors.⁴⁷

CONCLUSION

This study has demonstrated that the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC), through its operations in the Lafia Sector Command, plays a significant and increasingly strategic role in the enhancement of national security in Nigeria. While the Corps was originally established to regulate road traffic and reduce accidents, its contemporary functions extend far beyond conventional traffic management to include critical security-support roles. Given Lafia's strategic location as a major transit hub connecting the Federal Capital Territory with several northern states, the effectiveness of FRSC operations in this corridor has direct implications for internal security, economic stability, and public safety.

The findings of the study reveal that FRSC activities such as highway patrols, enforcement of traffic laws, verification of vehicle and driver documentation, accident rescue operations, and public enlightenment contribute substantially to the regulation of human and vehicular mobility. These functions help prevent the exploitation of road networks by criminal and insurgent elements, reduce avoidable loss of life, and promote orderliness on highways. Through routine patrols and checkpoint operations, the Lafia Sector Command has supported intelligence gathering and early-warning mechanisms by identifying suspicious vehicles, illegal cargo, and irregular movement patterns, which are often linked to criminal activities such as kidnapping, armed robbery, and smuggling.

Furthermore, the study establishes that FRSC's collaboration with other security agencies such as the Nigeria Police Force, the Nigerian Army, the Department of State Services, and the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps has strengthened inter-agency security responses within the Lafia axis. This cooperation has enhanced coordinated patrols, emergency responses, and information sharing, thereby improving the overall effectiveness of national security operations. In addition, the Corps' role in emergency management, particularly during road crashes, public disturbances, and security-related incidents, has helped mitigate secondary security threats and reinforced public confidence in state institutions. Despite these contributions, the study also identifies persistent challenges that limit the full realisation of FRSC's security potential in Lafia Sector Command. These include inadequate manpower, insufficient patrol vehicles, limited surveillance technology, poor road infrastructure, and occasional gaps in inter-agency coordination. Such constraints affect operational coverage and reduce the Corps' capacity to respond promptly to security threats and emergencies. Addressing these challenges is essential if the FRSC is to function more effectively as a complementary institution within Nigeria's national security framework.

In conclusion, the Federal Road Safety Corps in Lafia Sector Command has made a meaningful impact on national security by ensuring safer highways, regulating vehicular movement, supporting intelligence and emergency operations, and promoting law-abiding behaviour among road users. Strengthening the institutional capacity of the Corps through improved funding, advanced technology, continuous training, and enhanced collaboration with other security agencies will further consolidate its role in safeguarding national security. The study therefore affirms that road safety management is inseparable from national security, and the FRSC remains a vital actor in Nigeria's quest for peace, stability, and sustainable development.

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S/N	Name	Gender	Age	Occupation	Location	Date
1	Akiiga, Zawua Godwin	Male	55 years	FRSC	Akwanga	18/10/2025
2	Angbazo, Clement	Male	41 years	FRSC	Lafia	30/11/2025
3	Chewy, Aboshi	Male	30 years	Police	Nasarawa Eggon	30/11/2025
4	Damirim, Simdi Wesley	Male	58 years	NURTW	Lafia	23/11/2025
5	Dauda, Amos Ayimo	Male	40 years	FRSC	Lafia	12/11/2025
6	John, Rishen Jonah	Male	37 years	FRSC	Keffi	19/11/2025
7	Mafeng, Davou	Male	35 years	Trader	Lafia	26/11/2025
8	Maku, Luka Joseph	Male	45 years	NURTW	Lafia	30/11/2025

⁴⁷Bruce, "The future of intelligence gathering...160.

9	Ngohile, Aniwen	Male	37 years	FRSC	Garaku	25/11/2025
10	Panlong, D.K.	Male	40 years	Driver	Lafia	29/11/2025
11	Salihu, Mailafiya	Male	27 years	Student	Garaku	29/11/2025
12	Tanks, Adda Azizi	Female	32 years	Police	Akwanga	28/11/2025

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