

CONSTRAINTS AND STRATEGIC ENHANCEMENT OF CONFLICT TRACKING MECHANISMS FOR EFFECTIVE POLICING IN FCT ABUJA, NIGERIA

¹**Basil O. Ibebunjo**, *PhD* and ²**Lydia Abumere Ozoemena**

¹²Department of Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution,
National Open University of Nigeria, Abuja-Nigeria;

¹bibebnjo@noun.edu.ng

²lydiaozoemena@gmail.com

Abstract

This study examined the constraints and strategic enhancement of conflict tracking mechanisms for effective policing in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, Nigeria. Specifically, it investigated the significant challenges hindering the effective implementation of conflict tracking mechanisms in the FCT Police Command and examined strategies that can be adopted to improve conflict tracking mechanisms for more effective policing in Abuja. The study was anchored on Situational Crime Prevention Theory (SCPT). A mixed-methods research design was adopted, integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches. Data were obtained from 389 valid questionnaires and qualitative interviews with relevant police personnel, community stakeholders, and other key informants. Findings revealed that the effective implementation of conflict tracking mechanisms is constrained by reliance on informal and reactive reporting channels, weak integration of digital communication platforms, limited institutional collaboration, inadequate technological infrastructure, and limited application of advanced analytical tools such as Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and crime mapping. The study further found that improved utilisation of conflict tracking information, integration of conflict data into patrol strategies and deployment, regular analysis of conflict indicators, enhanced personnel training, and stronger institutional collaboration constitute important strategies for improving conflict tracking and policing effectiveness. Qualitative findings reinforced these results, highlighting weaknesses in technological infrastructure, data integration, personnel capacity, and systematic information-sharing arrangements. The study concludes that strengthening conflict tracking requires a shift from largely informal and reactive practices towards more systematic, integrated, and proactive approaches to policing. It recommends an integrated conflict tracking framework, continuous capacity building for police personnel, and stronger collaboration among the police, community stakeholders, and civil society organisations through formalised early warning and information-sharing networks.

Keywords: Conflict tracking; Effective policing; Situational Crime Prevention; Early warning; Intelligence analysis.

Introduction

Conflict tracking mechanisms have become increasingly important in contemporary policing because they support the identification of emerging tensions, monitoring of conflict patterns, and timely intervention. However, their implementation within Nigeria's security architecture remains constrained by technological, institutional, and socio-political challenges. These challenges are particularly significant in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, given its strategic importance, rapid urbanisation, population diversity, and complex security environment. Previous studies have shown that effective conflict management requires attention to both the structural conditions generating conflict and the mechanisms available for detecting and responding to emerging threats.

The deployment of data-driven policing approaches in Nigeria remains relatively limited. Crime mapping, predictive analysis, and other technological tools are constrained by inadequate infrastructure, limited funding, and shortages of skilled personnel (Nwachukwu et al., 2024). At the community level, traditional and locally based mechanisms have also remained important in crime control and security management (Aminu & Ibebunjo, 2022). Similarly, the growing influence of digital platforms has created new spaces for the emergence and spread of social tensions, making effective digital monitoring increasingly important (Ibebunjo, 2025). These challenges are compounded by weak police-community relations and limited institutional capacity, which can reduce the flow and effective utilisation of conflict-related information.

Despite the growing importance of conflict tracking in effective policing, its implementation in the FCT remains constrained by significant systemic and operational deficiencies. Nigerian law enforcement agencies continue to rely substantially on manual reporting and fragmented intelligence structures, limiting real-time analysis and coordinated responses (Nwachukwu et al., 2024). The CLEEN Foundation (2020) similarly identifies inadequate centralised crime databases and early warning systems as factors contributing to delayed responses to security threats.

Weak police-community relations and inadequate coordination among security actors further hinder effective conflict tracking. Where structured community engagement and information-sharing mechanisms are weak, emerging grievances

and early warning signals may remain unreported until they escalate (Akinyemi, 2024; Isaac et al., 2023). This is particularly important because community-based and traditional mechanisms continue to play a role in local crime control and conflict management (Ibebunjo, 2022). The increasing use of digital platforms also presents new challenges for policing, particularly in monitoring emerging forms of social tension and polarisation (Ibebunjo, 2025).

Furthermore, inadequate training, technological limitations, and weak integration of conflict-related information reduce the capacity of the police to transform available information into timely preventive action. While existing studies have examined broader policing and security challenges in Nigeria, limited empirical attention has been given specifically to the implementation of conflict tracking mechanisms within the FCT. Against this background, the study examines the significant challenges hindering the effective implementation of conflict tracking mechanisms in the FCT Police Command and identifies strategies for strengthening them for more effective policing in Abuja.

Research Questions

1. What are the significant challenges hindering the effective implementation of conflict tracking mechanisms in the FCT Police Command?
2. What strategies can be adopted to improve conflict tracking mechanisms for more effective policing in Abuja?

Conceptual Review

Concept of Conflict Tracking Mechanisms

Conflict tracking mechanisms refer to systematic processes for identifying, monitoring, documenting, and analysing emerging conflicts and their patterns to support timely intervention and prevention. In policing, these mechanisms involve information obtained from police records, intelligence sources, community reports, digital platforms, and other relevant channels. Their effectiveness, however, depends on reliable data systems, technical capacity, institutional coordination, and public cooperation. Local and community-based mechanisms also remain relevant to crime control and security management, particularly where formal systems are limited (Ibebunjo, 2022).

Effective conflict tracking further depends on timely and reliable information from communities. Underreporting, mistrust of security institutions, weak communication channels, and fragmented intelligence structures can reduce the effectiveness of early warning processes. The increasing role of digital platforms also requires attention to emerging forms of online tension and polarisation, which can develop into broader social conflicts (Ibebunjo, 2025). Thus, effective conflict tracking requires an appropriate combination of community intelligence, technological tools, institutional capacity, and public cooperation.

Concept of Effective Policing

Effective policing refers to the capacity of the police to prevent crime and conflict, respond promptly to security threats, maintain public order, and provide security in ways that promote public confidence and cooperation. In Nigeria, this capacity continues to be affected by inadequate resources, institutional weaknesses, low morale, and weak police-community relations (Alemika & Chukwuma, 2004; Aborisade & Amzat, 2019). These challenges can limit the adoption and sustainability of innovative approaches to conflict prevention and management. Effective policing increasingly requires intelligence-led approaches, community engagement, inter-agency cooperation, and appropriate use of data and technology. Conflict tracking can therefore strengthen policing by providing timely information for identifying emerging threats and supporting appropriate responses. The importance of combining formal policing with community-based approaches is also reflected in studies of local crime-control mechanisms (Ibebunjo, 2022). However, where information systems are fragmented and personnel lack adequate training and resources, the contribution of conflict tracking to policing effectiveness remains limited.

Conflict Prevention and Early Warning

Conflict prevention involves measures aimed at identifying and addressing potential sources of conflict before they escalate into violence or serious insecurity. Early warning systems support this process by collecting, analysing, and communicating information about emerging threats and tensions to facilitate timely preventive action. Within policing, effective early warning can strengthen

intelligence gathering, situational awareness, and the deployment of appropriate resources.

Community participation is particularly important because local stakeholders are often among the first to observe changes in social relations, emerging grievances, and potential security threats. Conflict transformation approaches similarly emphasise the importance of addressing underlying tensions and strengthening local capacities for peaceful management of disputes (Ibebunjo & Iroye, 2018). However, inadequate reporting mechanisms, mistrust, weak communication structures, and poor coordination can limit early warning effectiveness (Ejue & Okoye, 2020). Strengthening conflict prevention therefore requires the integration of community intelligence, appropriate technology, trained personnel, and coordinated institutional responses.

Theoretical Framework

Situational Crime Prevention Theory (SCPT)

Situational Crime Prevention Theory (SCPT), developed principally by Clarke (1980), explains crime prevention through the identification and modification of situations that create opportunities for criminal or harmful behaviour. The theory assumes that crime is influenced not only by individual motivation but also by the immediate circumstances in which opportunities for offending arise. Prevention can therefore be achieved by increasing the risks and difficulties associated with offending while reducing its potential rewards.

The theory is relevant to this study because conflict tracking mechanisms can provide information for identifying situations, locations, and patterns associated with emerging conflict and insecurity. Through systematic monitoring, intelligence gathering, community reporting, and analysis of conflict patterns, the police can identify potential threats and intervene before situations escalate. Technologies such as geographic information systems (GIS), digital reporting platforms, and other information systems can further support the identification and monitoring of emerging security threats (Ratcliffe, 2012).

SCPT also emphasises surveillance, guardianship, and the modification of environments to reduce opportunities for crime. In the context of the FCT, effective conflict tracking can strengthen police visibility, improve resource allocation, facilitate community participation, and support timely responses to emerging threats. But it does not take into account, larger theoretical concerns

underpinning recruitment of especially youths into violent conflicts, as raised by Larmode & Ibebunjo (2022). Community involvement is particularly relevant because local residents can provide information about developing tensions and suspicious activities that may not be immediately visible to formal security institutions. This complements the importance of community-based approaches to crime control identified in previous research (Aminu & Ibebunjo, 2022).

However, the application of SCPT to conflict tracking has limitations. The theory may give insufficient attention to the wider political, economic, and social conditions that generate conflicts (Ensign et al., 2017), and may raise concerns relating to surveillance, privacy, and data protection, especially for the Nigerian environment, going by the concerns raised by Agbaenyi & Ibebunjo (2021). Despite these limitations, SCPT provides a suitable framework for this study because it connects the identification of security risks with practical preventive measures. It therefore provides a useful theoretical basis for examining the challenges affecting conflict tracking mechanisms and the strategies required to strengthen their contribution to effective policing in the FCT, Abuja.

Empirical Review

Empirical studies on conflict tracking and policing in Nigeria have identified several institutional and operational constraints that limit the effectiveness of conflict monitoring and early warning mechanisms. Aremu (2018) notes that weak data systems, inadequate technical capacity, and fragmented intelligence structures can undermine the ability of security institutions to identify and respond to emerging threats. Similarly, studies of policing in Nigeria have identified inadequate resources, low personnel morale, and weak accountability as continuing institutional challenges affecting the adoption and sustainability of innovative policing approaches (Alemika & Chukwuma, 2004; Aborisade & Amzat, 2019).

Another important constraint identified in the literature is the weakness of police-community relations and information sharing. Ejue and Okoye (2020) found that community-based intelligence can contribute to conflict reduction, but its effectiveness may be limited by mistrust, inadequate reporting mechanisms, and weak institutional support. Okereke (2022) similarly observes that the integration of early warning mechanisms into police operations can be affected by inadequate coordination and information-sharing arrangements. These findings

suggest that the effectiveness of conflict tracking depends not only on formal police structures but also on the willingness and capacity of communities to provide timely information.

Technological and communication limitations have also emerged as significant challenges. Studies indicate that fragmented information systems and inadequate communication infrastructure can affect the collection, transmission, and analysis of conflict-related information (Aremu, 2018). Akinlabi (2021), in examining the #EndSARS experience, further demonstrates how weaknesses in police communication and public engagement can undermine trust and complicate conflict management. These findings are relevant to the present study because effective conflict tracking requires reliable information systems and communication channels through which emerging threats can be identified and communicated promptly.

With regard to strategies for strengthening conflict tracking, empirical evidence points to the importance of improved technological capacity, specialised training, and stronger intelligence systems. Ratcliffe (2012) argues that intelligence-led policing and the effective use of analytical technologies can improve the identification and management of security threats. Similarly, Muggah and Aguirre (2018) emphasise the value of data-driven approaches to understanding and responding to urban security challenges. These studies suggest that investment in appropriate technologies and analytical capacity can strengthen the ability of policing institutions to detect emerging conflicts and support preventive intervention.

Community engagement and institutional coordination also feature prominently among the strategies identified in the literature. Evidence from community policing studies indicates that sustained police-community interaction can improve information sharing and strengthen public cooperation (Ibrahim & Yusuf, 2018). Comparative evidence further suggests that effective community engagement requires continuity, local problem-solving capacity, and institutional commitment (Iroye & Ibebunjo, 2019). These findings indicate that strengthening conflict tracking in the FCT should involve greater community participation alongside improved coordination among relevant security institutions.

Evidence from Abuja provides further support for these strategies. Adelani et al. (2023), in their study of the Lugbe-Chika area, recommend stronger intelligence capacity, improved technology acquisition, and a governance

approach characterised by responsiveness and accountability. Overall, the empirical literature shows that conflict tracking is constrained by technological, institutional, human-resource, and relational challenges, while its enhancement requires improved technology, training, intelligence capacity, community participation, and coordinated institutional responses. However, the limited empirical attention given specifically to the implementation of conflict tracking mechanisms within the FCT creates a gap which the present study seeks to address.

Methodology

Research Design

The study employed a mixed-methods research approach, integrating quantitative and qualitative research designs to provide a comprehensive understanding of the constraints and strategic enhancement of conflict tracking mechanisms in policing within the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja. This enabled the collection of quantitative data from police personnel and stakeholders on the challenges affecting the implementation of conflict tracking mechanisms, while the qualitative component provided deeper insights into stakeholders' experiences, perceptions, and challenges associated with conflict monitoring, prevention, and response. Descriptive survey designs are particularly useful for assessing existing conditions, practices, and perceptions within a population without manipulating variables (Nworgu, 2015), while qualitative methods enrich the understanding of social phenomena through detailed contextual exploration (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Area of Study

The study was conducted in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, Nigeria's administrative and political capital and a heterogeneous metropolitan area comprising six Area Councils: Abaji, Bwari, Gwagwalada, Kuje, Kwali, and Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC). It is a hotspot for urban migration, civil service activities, and political engagement, making it a potential zone for diverse social conflicts ranging from communal disputes to urban crime. The Federal Capital Territory hosts several area commands and divisional police formations under the Federal Capital Territory Command of the Nigeria Police Force. Owing to its strategic importance as Nigeria's capital city, the FCT has also featured prominently in recent policing reforms, particularly community policing

initiatives and collaborative security approaches aimed at improving intelligence gathering and conflict prevention (Nigeria Police Force, 2024; Ogundiya & Monday, 2023).

Population of the Study

The population of the study comprised police personnel across selected Area Commands and divisions in the FCT, community leaders, youth representatives and civil society stakeholders involved in conflict resolution, as well as residents of selected communities within the FCT known for security vulnerabilities or active conflict tracking initiatives. The total target population was estimated at 3,000 individuals, comprising approximately 1,800 police officers and 1,200 community stakeholders, based on internal police service records and civil society engagement rosters.

Sampling Technique and Procedure

A multistage sampling procedure involving purposive, stratified, and simple random sampling techniques was employed for the study. In the first stage, four Area Councils within the Federal Capital Territory (FCT)—Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC), Bwari, Gwagwalada, and Kuje—were purposively selected due to their high population concentrations, strategic security significance, and the frequency of reported conflict and security-related incidents.

In the second stage, stratified sampling was used to categorise the study population into two major strata: police officers and community stakeholders, thereby ensuring adequate representation of both groups. The community stakeholder stratum comprised community leaders, youth representatives, religious leaders, and other relevant residents with knowledge of local security issues. In the final stage, simple random sampling was employed to select respondents from each stratum using available personnel records and community registers. This procedure ensured that participants had an equal chance of selection while facilitating balanced representation across different police ranks and community categories. The adopted sampling technique enhanced the representativeness of the sample and improved the reliability and validity of findings on the constraints and strategic enhancement of conflict tracking mechanisms in policing within the FCT, Abuja.

Sample Size Determination

The sample size for the study was determined using the Taro Yamane (1967) formula for finite populations at a 95 per cent confidence level and a margin of error of 5 per cent. The target population comprised approximately 3,000 individuals, consisting of 1,800 police officers and 1,200 community stakeholders within the selected Area Councils of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja. Application of the Yamane formula produced a minimum sample size of 353 respondents. To account for possible non-response and incomplete questionnaires and to enhance the representativeness of the study, the calculated sample size was increased by approximately 15 per cent, resulting in a final sample size of 406 respondents. The adoption of this sample size was considered adequate for generating reliable data and ensuring sufficient representation of both police personnel and community stakeholders in examining the constraints and strategic enhancement of conflict tracking mechanisms in policing within the FCT, Abuja.

Findings: Data Presentation and Analysis

This section presents and analyses the data collected for the study in line with the research questions. The primary data were obtained through questionnaires administered to police officers and community stakeholders within the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja. A total of 406 questionnaires were distributed to respondents, out of which 389 were properly completed and returned. Ten questionnaires were invalid due to incomplete or improperly filled responses, while seven were not retrieved. Consequently, the analysis presented in this study was based on the 389 valid questionnaires returned by the respondents. The variables in the table below were measured using a 5-point Likert scale.

(i) Significant Challenges Hindering the Effective Implementation of Conflict Tracking Mechanisms in the FCT Police Command

Table 1: Respondents' Rating of Challenges Hindering the Effective Implementation of Conflict Tracking Mechanisms in the FCT Police Command, N = 389

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev. (σ)	Decision
Limited use of advanced spatial and analytical tools such as GIS and crime mapping	2.73	0.758	Agree
Weak integration of digital communication platforms into conflict tracking operations	2.86	0.829	Agree
Limited institutional collaboration with NGOs and civil society organisations	2.77	0.753	Agree
Reliance on informal and reactive community-based reporting and interpersonal networks	2.98	0.914	Agree

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 1 presents respondents' views on the significant challenges hindering the effective implementation of conflict tracking mechanisms in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja. The findings show that reliance on informal and reactive community-based reporting and interpersonal networks recorded the highest mean score ($\bar{X} = 2.98$, $\sigma = 0.914$), indicating that respondents considered this a major challenge affecting the systematic implementation of conflict tracking mechanisms. Weak integration of digital communication platforms into conflict tracking operations recorded a mean score of 2.86 ($\sigma = 0.829$), suggesting that although digital platforms are available, their integration into formal policing operations remains limited. Similarly, limited institutional collaboration with NGOs and civil society organisations recorded a mean score of 2.77 ($\sigma = 0.753$), indicating that inadequate institutional linkages constitute another challenge to effective conflict tracking. Limited use of advanced spatial and analytical tools such as GIS and crime mapping recorded the lowest mean score ($\bar{X} = 2.73$, $\sigma =$

0.758), although the decision to agree indicates that respondents still recognised the issue as a challenge. Overall, the findings suggest that the implementation of conflict tracking mechanisms in the FCT is constrained by informal reporting practices, weak integration of digital tools, limited institutional collaboration, and inadequate application of advanced analytical technologies.

The interview findings further explain the challenges identified in the quantitative analysis. Interviews were conducted with key informants, including a community leader from Gwagwalada Area Council, an officer from the Intelligence and Surveillance Unit at the FCT Command Headquarters, a civil society representative from a human rights organisation, and an Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) in Bwari Area Council.

Participants acknowledged that the police obtain conflict-related information through community-based intelligence, social media monitoring, crime mapping, and collaboration with civil society organisations. However, respondents consistently noted that these mechanisms are often applied in an informal and reactive manner, with significant reliance on community members, local leaders, and interpersonal networks for information gathering and early warning. Participants also identified limited technological integration and weak institutional linkages as constraints to systematic conflict tracking. These findings indicate that while different conflict tracking mechanisms exist within the FCT Police Command, their implementation is affected by limitations in institutional integration, technological application, and the formalisation of information-gathering processes.

(ii) Strategies for Improving Conflict Tracking Mechanisms for More Effective Policing in Abuja

Table 2: Respondents' Rating of Strategies for Improving Conflict Tracking Mechanisms for More Effective Policing in Abuja, N = 389

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev. (σ)	Decision
Conflict tracking information is promptly used by the police to prevent escalation of disputes.	2.95	0.924	Agree
Data collected from conflict tracking systems directly informs police patrol strategies and deployment.	2.82	0.873	Agree
The police regularly analyse conflict indicators to guide proactive intervention measures.	2.80	0.860	Agree
Police officers receive adequate training to interpret and act upon conflict tracking data.	2.73	0.759	Agree

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 2 presents respondents' views on strategies for improving conflict tracking mechanisms for more effective policing within the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja. The findings show that the prompt use of conflict tracking information to prevent the escalation of disputes recorded the highest mean score ($\bar{X} = 2.95$, $\sigma = 0.924$), indicating that respondents considered timely utilisation of conflict information an important strategy for strengthening preventive policing. Similarly, the use of data generated from conflict tracking systems to inform police patrol strategies and deployment recorded a mean score of 2.82 ($\sigma = 0.873$), suggesting that integrating conflict information into operational planning can strengthen police responsiveness. Regular analysis of conflict indicators to guide proactive intervention recorded a mean score of 2.80 ($\sigma = 0.860$), indicating the importance of systematic analysis in supporting preventive intervention. However, adequate training of police officers to interpret and act upon conflict tracking data

recorded the lowest mean score ($\bar{X} = 2.73$, $\sigma = 0.759$), suggesting that capacity development remains an important area requiring attention. Overall, the findings indicate that improving conflict tracking for effective policing requires timely utilisation of information, integration of tracking data into patrol and deployment decisions, regular analysis of conflict indicators, and enhanced capacity of police personnel to interpret and apply conflict-related data.

The interview findings corroborate the quantitative results and provide further insight into strategies for improving conflict tracking mechanisms within the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja. Insights obtained from community leaders, civil society representatives, Inspectors, Assistant Superintendents of Police (ASPs), and officers attached to the Intelligence and Surveillance Unit indicated that conflict tracking information can support the identification and response to emerging conflicts when it is properly collected, analysed, and communicated. Participants emphasised the importance of strengthening the connection between information gathering and operational decision-making so that emerging threats can be addressed before they escalate.

The interviews further indicated that improved technological infrastructure, better integration of conflict-related information, and enhanced training in conflict data analysis would strengthen the effectiveness of existing mechanisms. Respondents also stressed the importance of moving from largely informal and reactive reporting towards more systematic approaches to conflict monitoring and early warning. These findings suggest that the effectiveness of conflict tracking in Abuja can be enhanced through improved institutional capacity, systematic analysis of conflict indicators, better integration of information into policing operations, and continuous training of personnel in the interpretation and operational use of conflict tracking data.

Discussion of Findings

The findings demonstrate that the effective implementation of conflict tracking mechanisms within the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, is constrained by technological, institutional, and operational challenges. The quantitative and qualitative findings indicate that reliance on informal and reactive reporting channels, weak integration of digital information, inadequate technological infrastructure, limited institutional coordination, and insufficient personnel capacity constitute significant constraints (Ibunjo & Ozoemena, 2025).

Community leaders and local networks remain important sources of conflict-related information, suggesting that conflict tracking continues to depend substantially on community-based intelligence rather than fully integrated institutional systems. This finding is consistent with Ismail (2025), who found that Nigerian law enforcement agencies face limitations in applying big data for intelligence gathering because of inadequate modern technologies and technical knowledge. The continued relevance of community-based intelligence also reflects the importance of local mechanisms in security management (Ibebunjo, 2025). Although social media and other digital platforms are utilised, their integration into formal policing operations remains limited, while GIS and crime mapping are comparatively weak. Uduo and Obaji (2024) similarly found that predictive policing technologies can improve crime-hotspot identification but require appropriate human judgement, institutional safeguards, and responsible application.

With regard to strategies for improving conflict tracking mechanisms, the findings indicate that prompt utilisation of conflict information, integration of tracking data into patrol strategies and deployment, regular analysis of conflict indicators, and enhanced training of police personnel are important areas for improvement. The relatively lower rating for adequate personnel training indicates a significant capacity gap, suggesting that the challenge is not merely the availability of information but the institutional ability to interpret and operationalise it. This is consistent with Okoru et al. (2024), who emphasise intelligence gathering, analysis, and application as important components of intelligence-driven policing in Nigeria. The findings therefore suggest that improving conflict tracking should extend beyond acquiring technology to include continuous professional training, analytical capacity, integrated information systems, and clear procedures for translating intelligence into operational decisions. Stronger early-warning arrangements are equally important because, as Arulogun (2023) observes, warning signs may precede conflict but are not always effectively recognised or acted upon.

Ultimately, the findings indicate that improving conflict tracking in the FCT requires a shift from largely informal and reactive practices towards more systematic, integrated, and proactive policing. Technology alone cannot resolve the identified challenges; rather, effective conflict tracking requires the integration of digital systems with community intelligence, trained personnel, institutional

coordination, clear reporting procedures, and timely operational responses. This also reinforces the importance of strengthening local capacities for identifying and addressing tensions before they develop into violent confrontation (Ibebunjo, 2018). The development of integrated conflict-monitoring platforms, continuous training in conflict-data analysis, improved use of GIS and digital intelligence tools, stronger police-community information networks, and clearer mechanisms for translating early-warning information into patrol and intervention decisions would enhance the capacity of the Nigeria Police Force to anticipate, prevent, and respond to emerging conflicts within the FCT.

Conclusion

The findings revealed that the effective implementation of conflict tracking mechanisms within the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, is constrained by technological, institutional, and operational challenges. These include limited technological infrastructure, weak integration of digital and conflict-related information, inadequate personnel training, limited institutional collaboration, and continued reliance on informal and reactive reporting channels. The study also found that conflict tracking information is utilised in policing, particularly in preventing the escalation of disputes, informing patrol strategies and deployment, and supporting proactive intervention. However, the effectiveness of these mechanisms remains constrained by weaknesses in systematic data analysis, institutional capacity, and the integration of conflict tracking information into policing operations.

The study concludes that strengthening conflict tracking mechanisms requires a shift from largely informal and reactive practices towards more systematic, integrated, and proactive approaches to policing. Timely utilisation of conflict information, improved technological capabilities, regular analysis of conflict indicators, enhanced training of police personnel, and stronger collaboration among the police, communities, and civil society organisations would improve the capacity of the Nigeria Police Force to identify emerging threats and respond to them before they escalate. The study therefore underscores the need for institutionalising conflict tracking processes and strengthening the technological and human capacities required to support effective policing in the FCT and similar urban environments in Nigeria.

Recommendations

From the foregoing, the underlisted are recommended.

- i. The Nigeria Police Force should institutionalise an integrated conflict tracking framework that combines community-based reporting, social media monitoring, civil society intelligence, and GIS-based crime mapping within a coordinated system. This would reduce reliance on informal and reactive reporting channels and improve the systematic collection, integration, and analysis of conflict-related information.
- ii. The Federal Government and the Nigeria Police Force should prioritise continuous capacity building for police personnel, particularly in conflict data analysis, digital technologies, intelligence interpretation, and the operational use of conflict tracking information. This would strengthen the capacity of officers to transform collected information into timely and actionable intelligence for preventive policing.
- iii. The Nigeria Police Force should strengthen structured collaboration with community stakeholders and civil society organisations through formalised early warning and information-sharing networks. Such collaboration should be supported by clear reporting, verification, and feedback mechanisms to ensure that community-generated intelligence is systematically captured, validated, analysed, and integrated into patrol planning and proactive policing operations.

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