

Enhancing Security within Residential Neighborhoods in Jos, Plateau State, North Central Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The current wave of insecurity in Nigeria has become a serious challenge within residential neighborhoods in many cities. This paper assess the security challenges within residential neighborhoods in Jos, with the view to suggesting measures for enhancing security for optimum comfort and livability of residents. Data for the study were obtained using questionnaire while mean score used for the analysis. Factors responsible for insecurity were progressive decline in quality of governance leading to high unemployment and widespread hardship, religious extremism and inadequate enforcement of laws for combating crime and religious extremism. Theft and burglary, vandalism and armed robbery were the main forms of insecurity identified. The impact of insecurity increase in household budget in search for alternative security, loss of man-hour due to shorten working hours as a result of fear; loss of limbs and lives of family members. The study suggested entrenching good governance that provides basic necessities of life, installation of modern security gadgets in addition to presence of armed security, inculcating religious tolerance among the adherents of the major religions and strong judiciary that upholds the rule of law for punishing crime as measures by punishing crime as measures for combating insecurity within the study area.

Keywords: Enhancing, security, residential, neighborhoods, Jos.

1. INTRODUCTION

One key requirement for habitability and livability of housing accommodation is the security of lives and property within the housing environment. However, what constitutes security which is an antithesis of insecurity is still a debatable subject across the globe. Olajide and Kolawole (2013) stressed that adequate housing security goes beyond just keeping intruders away to include protecting valuables such as personal information with identities as well as children and spouses. However, security has broadly been conceived from two ontological perspectives. The neo-realists view it from the objective prism as a reality that exists in form of physical protection of people (as well as property) from danger, violence and the capacity of impairing their social wellbeing or development. While postmodernists see it from a subjective ontological strand as a state of human mind that connotes feeling of safety from crime and safety or protection from emotional stress which results from the assurance that one is accepted and protected in one's neighborhood by people around; rather than physical. The focus is on emotional and psychological sense of belonging to a social group which can offer one protection (Alemika, 2015).

Until recently, security has been conceived from a state-centric perspective as social contract between the people and the government where people surrendered their rights to the State in return for safety and survival of all (Ewetan, 2014). Security therefore, relates to the mechanisms and strategies put in place by the state to prevent, mitigate or resolves violent conflicts, threats that might originates from other states and non-state actors. In this context, it

does not necessarily mean absence of threat but the existence of adequate measures to respond proactively to the challenges posed by them with the required expertise and expediency. However, recent trends have seen studies displacing the state as a major provider of security and placing high premium on individuals stressing that security is the responsibility of all. The attempts at a shift from physical measures such as military might to socio-economic measures such as job security, income security, health security, environmental/neighborhood security which Gasper (2015) referred to as human security which are more psychological than physical. This study viewed security from a pragmatic ontological perspective in which the focus is on both physical and psychological safety. For the purpose of this study therefore, security refers to the measures adopted either by the state, corporate or individuals for physical protection of people and property as well as guaranteeing emotional with psychological safety for optimum productivity. Insecurity signifies breach of security, danger, hazard, and uncertainty, lack of protection and lack of safety which creates a state of fear and anxiety (Ndubuisi-Okolo & Anigbuogu, 2019).

Recently, the need to provide security within housing neighborhoods has shaped Nigeria's Architecture with respect to housing design such that, construction of housing with high fences, burglar proofs, massive gates, installation of high lighting facilities at every corner of the residential environment among others is fast becoming the acceptable norm. These items are not cost free and in extreme cases they affect the beauty of the housing units and the environment as well. Despite these provisions, one cannot say with outmost confidence that housing neighborhoods in Nigeria are safe especially in city centres such as Jos which is often in the news for one violent attack or the other. The surge in the level of insecurity in Nigeria in recent years has become an issue of national discourse such that no day passes by without any form of security breach being reported. For instance, in 2021, an average of 14 Nigerians died daily in various violent attacks between January to December; 1,024 violent attacks were reported to have taken place across the country and killings were reported in all the months with May having the highest reported deaths of 684 while October had the least with 290. Subsequently, 111 people were kidnapped between January to mid-August 2021 and an estimated N11.415 billion was said to have been demanded as ransom for kidnapped victims (Okotie, 2021; Oluwafemi, 2022). These security infractions happen almost everywhere – roads, markets, workplace, residential neighborhood and worship centres among others. The security situation is so alarming that, residents in many regions of the country hardly sleep with both eyes closed while the government that is normally entrusted with the security of their lives and properties seems to be helpless (Madobi, 2022).

Residential Neighborhood crimes have negative consequences on the residents and the surrounding environment as well as the economy. Thornton (2021) posited that, crimes such as armed robbery is a serious crime and can permanently traumatize its victims, both physically and psychologically. In addition, it leads to neighborhood obsolescence and blight; residential mobility, decline in property values, neighborhood stigmatization which affect environmental sustainability and productivity at workplace (Olajide, Lizam & Adewole 2015). Agbelusi (2022) had reported that, in 2021 rising insecurity had cost Nigeria N119 billion which is 11 percent of its GDP and projects worth N12 trillion had been abandoned across the country. Similarly, the global peace index had ranked Nigeria 146th out of 163 countries with a score of 2.712, while among Sub-Saharan African countries, it was ranked 39th out of 44 countries. These discourage foreign investors coming into the country which affects the economic growth and development of the nation. Given the increase in other forms of urban terror such as kidnapping, banditry, armed robbery etc, the provision of security becomes necessary especially within residential neighborhoods in order to guarantee safety of occupants and property to ensure utmost productivity in the workplace.

However, concerted efforts are being made by government as well as the private sector (corporate and individual) to provide adequate security to lives and property in Nigeria. In attempt to combat crime and insecurity by the Federal Government, the Anti-Terrorism Act was passed into law in 2011 with the view to criminalising terrorism. Fundamental surveillance as well as investigation of criminal related offenses, heightening of physical security measures around the country aimed at deterring or disrupting potential attacks, strengthening of security agencies through the provision of security facilities and the development and broadcast of security tips in mass media (Nigeria-South Africa Chamber of Commerce, 2024). In order to complement efforts of the government, various civil security networks are being formed and residents are being trained on different security strategies by individuals, corporate organizations to ensure everywhere is safe and habitable including residential neighborhoods and places of work. Despite these efforts, reports have shown that, residential neighborhoods are still unsafe as crime rate remains high especially in major cities such as Jos.

Akinsowon (2021) submitted that troubles, gruesome murders, robberies, rape, ritual killings, kidnappings and abductions, politico-religious violence and infiltration of light weapons for mass crime are on the increase in many Nigerian city centres. These necessitated the investigation of the level of insecurity in residential neighborhoods in Jos. The study therefore, seeks to provide answers to the following questions: What are the factors responsible for insecurity within residential areas in Jos? What are the prevalent forms of security challenges in residential neighborhoods in Jos? What are the impacts of insecurity on residents and neighborhood environment? Also, how could the security of residential neighborhoods be enhanced? The study therefore, aimed at assessing the security challenges in residential neighborhoods with the view to suggesting measures for enhancing security of lives and property in Jos.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Study Area

Jos is a city in the Middle Belt of Nigeria, located at latitudes 9°45'00"N to 09°57'00"N and longitudes 8°48'00"E to 8°58'00"E (Akintunde, Adzandeh and Fabiyi, 2016). Jos city is located on the [Jos Plateau](#), at 1,238 metres above sea level. It has a population of 900,000 residents based on the 2006 census. Jos City is the administrative capital and largest city of [Plateau State](#). The city of Jos proper lies between Jos North and Jos South Local Government Areas. Due to incessant ethno-religious crisis, people prefer to relocate to areas where they have religious advantages creating faith-based settlements. In addition, numerous cases of security infractions have been reported ranging from kidnappings, abductions, ethno – religious conflicts, residential neighborhood crimes such as rape, arm robbery, theft and burglary among others. The researcher, having been residing in the city for over a decade has firsthand knowledge of security issues reported especially within residential areas. This informed the choice of Jos metropolis in order to assess the security challenges with the view to suggesting measures towards ameliorating the menace of insecurity within residential neighborhoods.

2.2. Methods of Data Collection and Analysis

The study focused on security challenges in residential neighborhoods in Jos; hence the target respondents were the heads of respective households. Using population densities, the study selected 6 areas comprising 2 each of low (Rayfield and Rantya Lowcost), medium (Lamingo and Millennium Quarters) and high (Anguwan Rukuba & Jenta) density areas. Being a survey research, the data were obtained using questionnaire as suggested by Yin, (2019). There are no available formal records of the number of houses in the selected areas. Consequently, determining the total population of households becomes extremely difficult. However, there are provisions in literature on the selection of samples from unknown population. In

determining a study sample from unknown population where the data is quantitative in nature. Napierala (2014) suggested the use of the formula below:

$$n = \frac{Z^2 * S^2}{\delta^2}$$

Where: n = minimum sample size;

Z = value of distribution function denoted by 0.1 = ±10 at 90% confidence level;

S = population standard deviation denoted by 1.64 at 90% confidence level and

δ = acceptable standard error (1% as set in this study).

Consequently, a total of 269 respondents were selected using multistage sampling technique. This technique allows the researcher to divide the population into groups and respondents are randomly selected from the groups in order to reduce the time taken to research an area (Bhat, 2023). Out of the 269 questionnaires administered, 193 were duly completed and used for the study indicating a response rate of 72% which is above the 20 - 30% suggested by Akintoye et. al.,(2000) for questionnaire in construction management studies. The data obtained were analysed using mean rating. This technique was used to analyse the respondents' opinion on the factors responsible for insecurity, prevalent security challenges within the study area and impacts of insecurity on residents and neighborhood environment; Peak period of crime was presented on a chart for clarity and ease of understanding.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study assessed the security situation of housing neighborhoods in Jos City. This section therefore discussed the factors responsible for insecurity within housing neighborhoods, the most prevalent forms security challenges with the impact's insecurity on the residents and the housing environment.

3.1. Respondents' Demographic Information

The demographics of the respondents were obtained with the view to determining the reliability of the information supplied and the result is presented in Table 1. In terms of age, 42.0% of the respondents were between ages 36 - 45 years, 26.0% between 46 - 55 years, 14.0% were between ages 56 - 65 years while 18% were below 35 years of age. Given the high rate of unemployment which is one of the many causes of crime in Nigeria, a youthful population such as this, is a pointer to high rate of insecurity. Based on gender, 77% were male while 33% were female. In relation to educational qualification, 46.0% had B.Tech/B.Sc, both M.Tech/M.Sc and ND/HND/NCE accounted for 19% each, while 14.0% had PhD. In terms of years spent in the areas of residence, 51% have put up between 11 – 20 years, 37% have been there for less than 10 years and 12% have lived there for over 30 years. The level of education combined with years of living within the neighborhood, suggested that the respondents have the requisite knowledge and experience to supply valid information for the study.

3.2. Factors Responsible for Insecurity within Residential Neighborhoods in Jos Metropolis

Factors responsible for insecurity in Jos metropolis were investigated and the result is shown in Table 2. Progressive decline in quality of governance leading to widespread hardship (4.01), high rate of unemployment among youths (3.87), inadequate enforcement of laws for combating crime (3.71) and Religious extremism;(3.70) were rated as the top four factors responsible for insecurity in the study area. Conflicting political ideologies (2.87), seclusion from social network (2.74) and violent resistance to exploitation by the state (2.61) however,

received the least ratings by the respondents. This therefore indicated that, insecurity in Jos metropolis is highly linked to poor governance which breeds hardship amongst citizens, high rate of unemployment, inadequate enforcement of laws for combating crime, and religious extremism among the adherence various religious groups.

Table 1: Demographic Information of Respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
<25	17	09
26-35	17	09
36-45	81	42
46-55	51	26
56-65	27	14
Total	193	100
Gender		
Female	44	23
Male	149	77
Total	193	100
Academic qualification		
SSCE	04	02
ND/HND/NCE	37	19
B.Tech/B.Sc	88	46
M.Tech/M.Sc	37	19
PhD	27	14
Total	193	100
Period of occupation in the Area (in years)		
<10	71	37
11-20	98	51
21-30	14	07
>30	10	05
Total	193	100

Field Survey, 2023

Table 2: Contributing Factors to Insecurity within Residential Neighborhoods in Jos Metropolis

Factors	Mean	S D	Rank
Progressive decline in quality of governance leading to widespread hardship	4.01	1.03	1 st
High rate of unemployment among youths	3.87	1.02	2 nd
Inadequate enforcement of laws for combating crime	3.73	1.27	3 rd
Religious Extremism	3.70	1.09	4 th
Extreme poverty among citizens	3.65	1.05	5 th
Total collapse of family values and lack of home training	3.61	1.17	6 th
Lack of political will to deal with crime	3.60	1.23	7 th
Ineffectiveness of security agencies in controlling crime	3.58	1.11	8 th
Influence of drug abuse	3.52	1.31	9 th
Peer group influence especially among youths	3.48	1.02	10 th
Proliferation of religious sects spreading religious intolerance	3.42	1.52	11 th
Easy access to small fire arms and light weapons	3.35	1.19	12 th
Proliferation of illegal arms and ammunition	3.26	1.15	13 th
High level of illiteracy among youths	3.03	1.19	14 th
Poor environment characterized by physical and social disorder	3.03	1.14	14 th
Proliferation of ethnic militia in response to failure of security system	3.00	1.26	16 th
Individual incentives (economic) to violence	2.97	1.11	17 th
Undue emphasis on the acquisition of wealth and power	2.94	1.23	18 th
Conflicting political ideologies	2.87	1.17	19 th
Seclusion from social network	2.74	1.15	20 th
Violent resistance to exploitation by the state	2.61	1.17	21 st

Field Survey, 2023

This affirmed the submission of Chukwuemeka (2022) that the insecurity in Nigeria is linked to bad governance, poverty due to unemployment and weak judicial system; stressing that government's inability to provide public services and meet the basic needs of the masses has created a group of frustrated people who could turn violent at the slightest opportunity. Good governance has been identified as the bedrock for security with national development, remains a driving force towards peace and sustainable development all over globe. This indicated that progressive decline in quality of governance would manifest in hardship which breeds insecurity especially in housing neighborhoods as suggested by this study. One key indices of bad governance is unemployment which breeds poverty amongst citizens and any country with a poor population, would have a serious insecurity problem. This agrees with the report of Segun (2014), that unemployment results into poverty among citizens which in turn induces insecurity. In Nigeria, the rate of unemployment in many city centres including Jos is very high likewise the level of poverty; this has played significant part in the level of insecurity in the country. Entrenching a responsible government on the basis of inclusiveness under which the living standard of citizens is improved will go a long way in reducing insecurity in Nigeria. In recent years, religious extremism has been a serious issue of concern especially in Northern part of the country. For instance, the issue of Boko Haram insurgency has claimed lot of lives and properties. Religious motivated crises have been a recurrent decimal in the City of Jos such that all past governments deal with it since the return of democracy in 1999. This has created fears and distrust in the minds of the populace leading to the evolvement of faith – based settlements. In addition, people are been kidnapped from their houses, explosives planted in residential areas and valuables such as cars been snatched away. The inadequacy of security personnel to maintain law and order by arresting and prosecuting offenders is another challenge to curbing insecurity in Nigeria. Furthermore suspected persons arrested in connection to crime are seldom prosecuted due to weak judicial system and corruption. In most cases, they are hurriedly released into the society without proper investigation which prompted Chukwuemeka (2022) to suggest that many criminals have bought their freedom with money in Nigeria and the legal system has abandoned its people and released all kinds of atrocities, which had in no small measures added to the security challenges in the country. Inculcating religious tolerance among the adherence of the major religions will also be a useful strategy for fighting insecurity in Jos metropolis. A strong judiciary that is free of corruption and eager to punish perpetrators of evil is an important ingredient in combating insecurity.

3.3. Forms of Security Challenges within Residential Neighborhoods in Jos Metropolis

Insecurity within housing neighborhoods manifests in diverse ways and forms. The various forms of security challenges in residential areas in Jos were investigated and the result is presented in table 3. The result indicated that theft and burglary (3.58), vandalism (3.56), armed robbery (3.52) and snatching of valuables (3.32) received the highest ratings suggesting that they were the top 4 prevalent forms of security challenges. At the distant end were aggravated assaults (2.00), kidnapping (1.81) and Rape (1.68) ranked as the least security threats. This indicated that the prevalent forms of security threat within residential areas in Jos metropolis were theft and burglary, vandalism or use of force to gain entry into households or cars, armed robbery and forceful snatching of valuables.

This finding is similar to the report of Signal (2020) that the major forms of security threats within housing neighborhoods include theft, break-ins and vandalism; the only major point of departure is the use of firearms. In recent years, the use of light firearms for robbery and other crimes has been on the increase in Jos; easy access to firearms could be attributable to years of inter-communal and ethno-religious conflicts that had bedeviled the City. In Jos, like other cities in Nigeria, low and medium density areas rarely feel the presence of government in terms of democratic dividends; the areas are not planned, lack road network,

basic necessities such as tap water; some of the residential areas are highly congested making them easy hideouts for hoodlums. These areas can best be described as slums with high intake of illicit drugs and crime thereby increasing their vulnerability. Moreover, the near absence of trained and armed state security in addition to the porous security architecture of such settlements allows free ingress and egress of residents including trespassers without thorough scrutiny which motivates crimes such as theft and vandalism as perpetrators would always escape easily without being apprehended.

However, these forms of security breaches are less pronounced in low density areas as most of the houses are gated apartments which help in keeping off intruders. In addition to presence of armed security personnel, the government could embark on neighborhood revitalisation to decongest those areas through comprehensive redevelopment, rehabilitation or renovation and modernisation of houses as well as construction of streets and provision of infrastructure such as public utilities in order to minimize the level of insecurity in residential areas. On the hours that these security infractions are recorded, 38% occurred at the wee hours between 12 midnight and 6am, 23% are committed between 9pm- and 12 midnight, 19% between 12 noon and 4pm, 16% occur between 4pm and 9pm while as low as 4% take place between 6am and 12noon (Figure 1). This indicated that most of the security breaches occur at night when residents were asleep and during working hours when they might have gone to places of work or businesses which underscores the need for trained personnel to monitor any sinister movements within such periods.

Table 3: Prevalent Forms of Security Challenges within residential areas in Jos Metropolis

Challenges	Mean	SD	Rank
Theft and burglary	3.58	1.14	1 st
Vandalism	3.56	1.14	2 nd
Armed robbery	3.52	1.38	3 rd
Snatching of valuables	3.32	1.04	4 th
Clashes between rival cult groups	2.29	1.29	5 th
Pilfering	2.16	1.06	6 th
Street thuggery	2.13	1.25	7 th
Shoplifting	2.03	1.16	8 th
Aggravated assaults	2.00	1.15	9 th
Kidnapping	1.81	0.94	10 th
Rape	1.68	0.97	11 th

Source: Field Survey, 2023

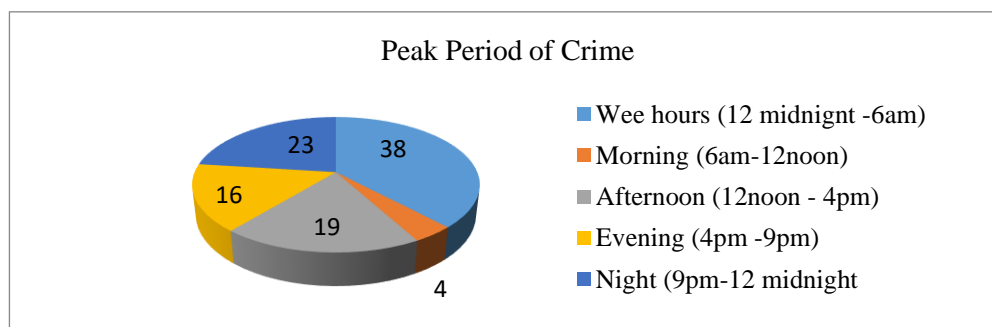


Figure 1: Peak Period of Crime within Residential Neighborhoods in Jos Metropolis

This finding agrees with the submission of Ajibade (2019) that security breaches such as armed robbery in residential areas occur mostly at night when residents might have retired to bed to sleep attributing it to lack of advanced and effective security measures as well as security lighting within estates. Therefore, the need for urgent attention by government and relevant stakeholders to ensuring that households are adequately protected at all times. This could be achieved through provision of modern security gadgets such as installation of CCTV

cameras, solar powered security lights among others to discourage people with criminal tendencies.

3.4. Impacts of Insecurity on Residents and Housing Environment in Jos Metropolis

Insecurity has tremendous impact on lives, property as well as the neighborhood. Table 4 presents the respondents ratings of the impact of insecurity in the study area and the results indicated that increase in household budget in search for alternative security (4.35). Loss of man hour due to shorten working hours as a result of fear (4.23), loss of limbs and lives of household members (3.92) and low demand for housing leading to low property value (3.77) were the prevalent forms of insecurity within residential areas in Jos. Increased cost of maintenance to make good damaged parts of buildings (2.48), increased hostilities among occupants (2.42) and disruption of family social life (2.13) received the least ranks as the inconsequential forms of security threats in the study area.

Table 4: Impacts of Insecurity on Residents and Housing Environment in Jos

Impact	Mean	S D	Rank
Increase in household budget in search for alternative security	4.35	1.12	1 st
Loss of man hour due to shorten working hours as a result of fear	4.23	1.33	2 nd
Loss of limbs and lives of household members	3.92	1.32	3 rd
Low demand for housing leading to low property value	3.77	1.25	4 th
Difficulty in raising children within the neighborhood	2.90	1.22	5 th
Great personal suffering	2.84	1.09	6 th
Placing excessive burden on the urban social network	2.84	1.06	6 th
Deepening of hunger and poverty within the neighborhood	2.74	1.21	8 th
Destruction of property and other valuables	2.68	1.27	9 th
Social dislocation and population displacement	2.58	1.25	10 th
Psychological fear and overall low performance in work place	2.52	1.09	11 th
Increased cost of maintenance to make good damaged parts of buildings	2.48	1.23	12 th
Increased hostilities among occupants	2.42	1.17	13 th
Disruption of family social life	2.13	1.11	14 th

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The result indicated that the major impact of insecurity within residential areas in Jos borders on the search for alternative security by households, instilling fear in the minds of residents leading to ineffective use of working hours, loss of limbs and lives of family members and Low demand for housing which affects property investments in such areas. The recent wave of insecurity in Nigeria has increased the need for alternative security to complement the effort of state security. This has led to the emergence of numerous private security guards which are often hired to protect residential neighborhoods. In Jos, several private security outfits abound such as neighborhood watch, community policing, hunters' association, vigilante organisations among others all in attempt to provide security to residential areas. Households contribute certain amounts to hire these private security outfits to complement the efforts of the already over stretched state security. In as much as these arrangements are necessary, they cannot be said to be effective in providing the needed security within the said communities.

Psychologically, insecurity instills fear in the minds of residents as no one knows when the next attack would take place or who would be the next victim. Consequently, residents tend to cut down on number of hours they stay outside which affects their productivity as well as effectiveness at workplace. Before the recent security challenges, the city of Jos used to be alive with people engaging in different activities up to late hours of the night. However, in recent years, residential neighborhoods, including the selected areas become quiet as residents keep indoors for fear of the unknown. This affect their businesses as well as efficiency at work place especially those in the private sectors that work at night. A cursory survey of the selected

areas specifically the low density areas which are the most vulnerable settlement revealed that, property investment no longer provide the expected yields because of low demand. People avoid volatile settlements out of fear which create low demand leading to low property values. The government, in collaboration with the relevant stakeholders needs to step up and beef up the security within the residential areas to boost peoples' confidence and to guarantee the safety of residents and their valuables.

4. CONCLUSION

The study assessed the security challenges within residential neighborhoods in Jos metropolis with the view to suggesting effective measures for enhancing security. Causes and forms of insecurity were explored so also its impact on residents and housing environment. One of the key factors that breed insecurity is bad governance manifesting in unemployment, poverty, leading to frustration and anger among citizen which provide a fertile ground for crime and other social vices. It was discovered that poverty has played significant role in breeding insecurity in Jos which has claimed many lives and property especially in high density areas which are often hide outs for hoodlums owing to high rate of poverty and near absence of government in terms of basic utilities. The need for responsible and all inclusive government with good economic policies that would better the standard of living of the populace becomes imperative in order to reduce the level of insecurity in housing neighborhoods.

Similarly, Jos City has witnessed numerous religious related crises in recent years and residential and worship areas have always been the target points for destruction. These have contributed immensely towards easy access to light firearms which explained the high use of firearms for robbery in residential neighborhoods within the city. Despite the efforts of the government, insecurity in Jos, especially within residential neighborhoods remains an issue of concern. Moreover, the inability of the judiciary to fight crime and other social vices due to corruption has not helped in addressing insecurity in the study area. In addition to presence of armed security personnel, there is the need for adopting holistic approach such as urban renewal programs which involves comprehensive redevelopment and reconstruction of blighted areas by creating access roads, recreational facilities and other basic necessities with the view to enhancing the security of resident's valuables. A strong and vibrant judicial system that is free of corruption would go a long way in enhancing security by ensuring that apprehended evil doers are adequately punished to serve as deterrent to others with criminal tendencies.

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